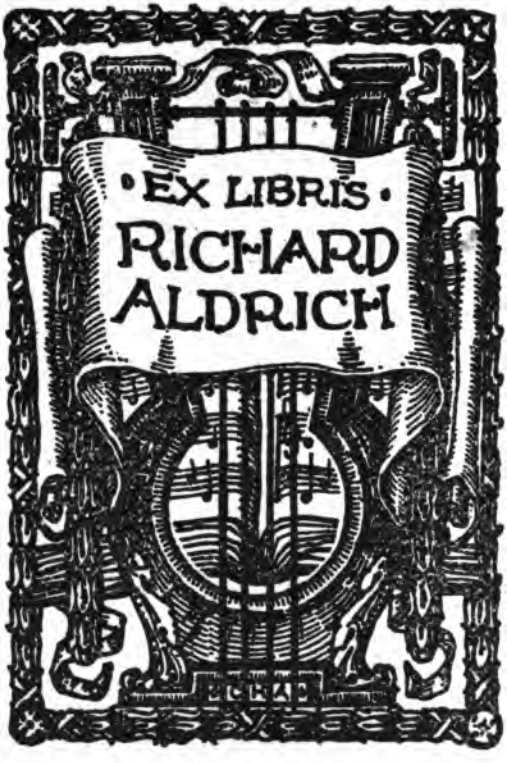
BEETHOVEN

WALKER



THE MUSIC OF THE MASTERS

EDITED BY WAKELING DRY

THE MUSIC OF THE MASTERS

BEETHOVEN: BY ERNEST WALKER

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NEW YORK
BRENTANO'S
UNION SQUARE
MCMV

Printed by
BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN'S LIFE

1770. Born at Bonn, probably on December 16th. Second child of a tenor singer in the service of the Elector of Cologne, and of the daughter of the chief cook at the Castle of Ehrenbreitstein.

1783. Appointed opera-conductor, and, shortly afterwards, organist also in the Elector's service.

1787. First short visit to Vienna: had a few lessons from Mozart.

1792. Permanent settlement in Vienna: lessons from Haydn and Albrechtsberger: prominent primarily as a pianist.

1798. First beginnings of deafness, gradually increasing till it became nearly total.

1800. April 2nd, first concert given on own account: First Symphony, C major Pianoforte Concerto, and Septet produced.

1804. "Eroica" Symphony completed.

1805. November 20th, first performance of "Fidelio."

1808. December 22nd, first performance of C minor and Pastoral Symphonies, and G major Pianoforte Concerto.

1813. December 8th, first performance of A major Symphony.

1816. Publication of G major (Op. 96) Violin Sonata, B flat Trio, F minor Quartet, and Seventh and Eighth Symphonies.

1819. B flat Pianoforte Sonata (Op. 106) completed.

1822. January 13th, last Pianoforte Sonata completed.

1824. May 7th, first performance of Choral Symphony, and of portions of the "Missa Solennis."

1826. November, last finished work (finale of B flat Quartet, Op. 130) written.

1827. Died at Vienna, March 26th.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE mass of Beethoven literature is enormous: the following list represents merely the best of the standard works on the subject, with some notable articles and useful pamphlets, easily accessible to the English reader.

Beethoven's own letters. Partially translated into English.

Very interesting in many ways, but do not on the whole throw much light on the music itself.

Berlioz. Articles in "Voyage musical" and "A travers chants."

Among the earliest real appreciations of Beethoven: but somewhat rhapsodical and unbalanced.

Dannreuther. Article in "Macmillan's Magazine," July 1876.

Of much interest.

Grove. Article on "Beethoven" in "Grove's Dictionary": "Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies": analyses in Crystal Palace programme-books.

Historically most trustworthy, and the outcome of great literary labour and fine enthusiasm: but by no means altogether reliable in matters of technical scholarship.

Hadow. The Viennese Period (Oxford History of Music, vol. v).

Contains an excellent chapter on Beethoven.

Nottebohm. "Beethoveniana," "Zweite Beethoveniana," "Thematic Catalogue" (Breitkopf and Härtel). Two Monographs on special Sketch-books.

Monuments of patient research, and absolutely indispensable for the study of Beethoven's methods of composition.

Parry. "The Art of Music," and articles on "Form," "Sonata," "Symphony," and "Variations," in "Grove's Dictionary."

Contain many pages of very high value on Beethoven.

Schindler. "Life of Beethoven," translated into English by Moscheles.

The work of an intimate friend of the composer, and consequently of much biographical interest: but not altogether trustworthy.

Shedlock. Articles on the Sketch-books in "Musical Times," 1892, 1893, 1894.
Very interesting.

Thayer. "Life of Beethoven."
The standard authoritative biography, now being revised and completed by Deiters.

Tovey. Analytical essays.
Contain many lengthy analyses of works of Beethoven, of exceptional interest and full of the finest scholarly insight.

Wagner. "Beethoven."
Frequently rhapsodical almost to the point of incoherence, but nevertheless containing much that is striking and luminous.

THE
MUSIC OF THE MASTERS

CHAPTER I

CHORAL MUSIC

APART from some youthful cantatas devoted to the joys and sorrows of royal personages, Beethoven's first choral work was the oratorio "Christus am Oelberge," written in 1800, and known in England as "Engedi, or David in the Wilderness," in the dim though not so very distant days when it was supposed to be the correct thing to offer up mutilated music at the shrine of theological sensibilities: it is Beethoven's only oratorio, and, during the period when that form was held to be necessarily the sphere of a musician's highest activities, was much more frequently heard than it is now. He appears to have contemplated a sequel to it, to be called "Die Höllenfahrt des Erlösers," but this never came to any-

thing: towards the end of his life he expressed to his friend Schindler his dissatisfaction with his early work, and his regret that he had treated the part of Jesus in too operatic a style. And indeed it must be confessed that "Christus am Oelberge" is not at all one of the works on which Beethoven's fame rests: the libretto is a distinctly unsatisfactory compromise between incongruous elements, and the composer does not quite seem to have known how to take it. The trio for the Seraph, Jesus, and Peter is almost as cheerful as Rossini's *Stabat Mater* (though of course far better as music): and the prima donna Seraph, with her brilliant scales up to the topmost E and cadenzas *à la* Liszt, is certainly a somewhat singular figure. Nevertheless, in spite of some rather poor melodrama (as in the setting of the words of Jesus, "Meine Qual ist bald verschwunden") and a good deal of rather thin operatic style, the work contains much that is really very beautiful and worthily representative of the first-period manner. The lengthy soprano solo and chorus, "O Heil euch, ihr Erlösten," is in many ways very charming music: the duet for the Seraph and Jesus, "So ruhe denn mit ganzem

Schwere," is finely flowing and dignified, and the final chorus is vigorous, straightforward work, rather curiously Handelian in places. But, when all has been said, Beethoven's single oratorio does nothing to make us believe that he thought the form really perfectly satisfactory from the artistic point of view.

The Mass in C of 1807 is in every way a far finer work, and, though too much overshadowed by its greater successor, is full of noteworthy beauties: it was written for the Esterhazy private chapel at Eisenstadt, where so many of Haydn's works had been first produced. The *Kyrie* is a very beautiful, graceful movement, full of distinction and simple charm, with an exquisite and very original whispered ending; the *Gloria*, however, though solid and spirited, with some fine bold touches, is on the whole much less interesting. The first portion of the *Credo* contains some very powerful strokes, as at the words "Deum de Deo," &c., and the *Incarnatus* and *Crucifixus* are very fine (as long as we can forget how Beethoven set them subsequently), the ending of the latter, with its strange forlorn sort of harmony, being deeply impressive; the remaining portion

is, on the whole, not so great, though the breezy fugue, "Et vitam venturi," is very broad and vigorous. The *Sanctus* is very solemn and striking, with remarkable harmonies: the *Pleni sunt coeli* and the *Osanna* are fine though not quite so noteworthy, and the long *Benedictus* contains many very beautiful things, especially the ending, where the chorus monotones *pianissimo* on the tonic chord, very much as it does at the beginning of the same movement in the D major Mass. After this closes in F major the short *Osanna* in A major is repeated according to custom: here, where the movements are so dissimilar in length, style, and tonality, the structural result is certainly unsatisfactory, and it may well be that it was the conviction that this was the case that made Beethoven cut this particular knot altogether in the D major Mass. The *Agnus Dei* is finely expressive and flowing: the *Dona nobis* is, however, not so striking, and, though containing many beauties, is rather coloured by the eighteenth century idea of the practical necessity of a more or less cheerful conclusion. But Beethoven is strong enough to break through this convention, at any rate partially, by the addition of a section seventeen bars long,

where he returns to the music of the original *Kyrie*, set, however, to the *Dona nobis* words. Perhaps we may feel this a little too short for the perfect balance and clinching of the whole structure, but it forms an undeniably very touching and expressive finish.

Fine, however, as is the Mass in C, we are inclined to forget most of it when we look at Beethoven's second Mass in D (styled *Missa solennis* for no reason but its dimensions), which is one of his most colossal masterpieces, and occupied him more or less continuously from the autumn of 1818 till the spring of 1823. It was originally designed for the installation ceremony of the Archduke Rudolph as Archbishop of Olmütz; but it was not finished till long afterwards, and anyhow its enormous size and difficulty would have made it impossible as a mere succession of interludes in a service—though indeed the "praeludium" to the *Benedictus*, exactly at the place of the customary pause during the elevation of the Host, may conceivably be taken as an indication that Beethoven had not altogether lost sight of the ecclesiastical aspect of his music.[1] The enormous techni-

[1] I owe my first reflections on this point, as on many others, to my friend Mr. Donald Tovey.

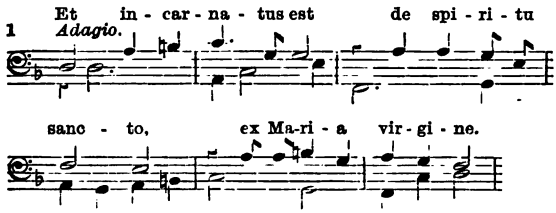
cal difficulties of the choral parts may be considered in a later chapter, when discussing Beethoven's vocal writing as a whole; in nearly all respects it is one of the most exacting works ever composed. The *Kyrie*, *Credo*, and *Agnus Dei*, were originally produced by themselves at the concert in May 1824, when the Choral Symphony also first saw the light: they were announced as "three hymns" and sung with German words (the clerical censorship having intervened, as the concert took place in a theatre)—a proceeding which made Beethoven furiously and very naturally angry.

The *Kyrie* is a movement of grave, solemn beauty, with no special outstanding themes, but designed on what, in later parlance, may be called "endless melody" lines; its heading, "mit Andacht," is used also for the *Sanctus*. The *Gloria* is, as usual, divided into several sections, though they are not separated by any definite pauses, and are here indeed notably organised through the final return to the opening portion. Apart from the *Larghetto*, "Qui tollis," all the sections are generally vigorous in character, though full of extraordinary beauties of light and shade and subtle balancing of climaxes, the crowning part

being a great fugue on the words " in gloria Dei patris," that ends with a return to the original opening of the *Gloria*—a steadily *fortissimo* torrent of sound several pages long finishing in a mighty shout for the chorus alone after the instruments have ceased. In the *Credo* nearly all composers seem to have found the inevitable repetition of certain clauses (especially those after the words " credo in spiritum sanctum ") somewhat inconvenient, as necessitating unusually sectional treatment and lacking in themselves material for musical expression ; but Beethoven solves the difficulty by the somewhat heroic method of very quick treatment of these clauses, divided between the different choral parts in a manner that renders them practically inaudible, so that he has all the more space left for the unfettered handling of the portions more amenable to musical conceptions.[1] The whole movement is built on a scale that is even more stupendous than that of the *Gloria*, the separate sections being held

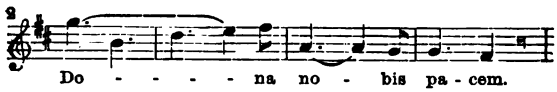
[1] In spite of this cursory view of some clauses, Beethoven does not, however, anywhere approach the singular custom of Schubert, in whose masses the separate choral parts are sometimes guilty of the ungrammatical assertion of the most astounding heresies.

together not only by continuity of treatment, but also by the fact that the word "credo" is sung throughout to the same phrase. Overwhelming as is the effect throughout, the greatest moments are those of the *Incarnatus* and *Crucifixus* (the former—



in a sort of Dorian mode tonality, being perhaps the supreme existing example of musical mysticism), and the final fugue, "Et vitam venturi"—born, as the composer's friend Schindler tells us, by methods of sheer physical agony—with its tranquilly simple and solemn ending. The *Sanctus* consists of three short sections all in D major (the *Sanctus* itself, deeply impressive, dark, and mystical, and vigorous settings of the *Pleni sunt coeli* and the *Osanna*), and a much longer one in G major, the *Benedictus*. This last is an *Andante molto cantabile e non troppo mosso*, throughout the whole of which a solo violin pours forth a

stream of the purest melody, the movement being from first to last full of a deep, calm loveliness that strikes a note unheard in the rest of the work. Beethoven seems to have felt that the customary repetition of the loud *Osanna* would be out of place at the end of a movement like this, and so he abandons the usual structural method: he does indeed repeat the words, but they are set to quite different music, and after they are over, the original strains of the *Benedictus* are heard again as the solo violin soars to the utmost heights. The *Agnus Dei* that ends the Mass consists, as is ordinary, of two portions, one an *Adagio* in B minor very subdued and sombre in tone, and the second the *Dona nobis* in D major, *Allegretto vivace*, inscribed "a prayer for inward and outward peace," and certainly, even on close acquaintance, the most difficult portion of the Mass to grasp. Some have thought that, even in this pure "third-period" style, Beethoven was still unable totally to divest himself of the old notion of the necessarily cheerful ending: and though this view is somewhat exaggerated, it is yet perhaps difficult to deny that, in spite of great beauties and the magnificent nobility of its chief phrase—



the movement is in many respects not equal in musical interest to the rest. Anyhow, the prayer for peace is, as a rule, heroic and confident to the point of strenuousness; and the objective aspect of the whole is intensified by some strangely impressive passages of sheer realism, where the horrors of war are definitely painted. These famous passages are three in number: at the first the drums and trumpets begin far and ghostly, and gradually increase in intensity, while the voices, *ängstlich*, plead for mercy; at the second the orchestra has a long, fierce, almost incoherent interlude ending in some pages of sheer brutality, over which the soprano soloist cries despairingly; while at the third the war-note has sunk to a mere restless murmur of the drum,[1] with the voices hushed to tranquil confidence.

As both the Choral Fantasia and the

[1] On B flat, a note entirely alien to the neighbouring harmonies—a stroke of amazing genius, which misprints in some authoritative analyses, and also in some vocal scores, and the inaccurate ears of some famous players, do their best to conceal.

Choral Symphony are after all primarily instrumental works, they may be more fitly dealt with in later chapters: and Beethoven's other choral writings need not detain us long. The cantata, "Der glorreiche Augenblick," is a *pièce d'occasion* written in 1814 for a great concert given to celebrate the Congress of Vienna: it is a long work, but contains hardly two consecutive bars worthy of Beethoven's genius. The setting of Goethe's "Meerestille und glückliche Fahrt" (1815) is, however, very different. The first section is simple but very beautiful, with striking colour-effects, and the second is delightfully breezy: it is a pity that this charming work is so seldom performed. Two short late compositions—a quietly solemn "Opferlied" for soprano, chorus, and orchestra,[1] and a far inferior "Bundeslied" for soli, chorus, and wind (with some curiously elaborate clarinet parts)—complete the list of Beethoven's choral works.

[1] Revised from an early work.

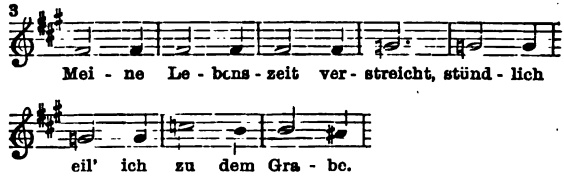
CHAPTER II

SOLO VOCAL MUSIC

BEETHOVEN'S songs form, on the whole, the least interesting section of his music. To him, as indeed to practically all composers before Schubert, the vocal lyric was not a form of art that was specially congenial, nor indeed one to be taken, as a rule, particularly seriously; and it is comparatively rarely that we meet in Beethoven's songs music that would be worth troubling about were it not for the magic of his name. Literary instinct, in the modern sense of the words, he apparently, like practically all musicians till comparatively recent days, did not possess; and he applied himself to Goethe and also to the greatest rubbish with impartial unconcern. The wanderer in these bypaths will come across odd things in the shape of "comic songs" and alternative settings of the same words from widely diverse standpoints: the four versions of "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt"

are also curious, though none of them possesses much interest. As a rule, the songs are simple and light in character, and very often purely strophic in form; and the accompaniments do not, except in comparatively few cases, supply much more than a merely supporting background.

But, of course, it is impossible to take up any collection of Beethoven's music without discovering pearls of great price; and among the songs we find a certain quantity of very fine and characteristic work, some of which is comparatively little known to concert-goers. In the old days of the exclusive worship of the *bel canto*, "Adelaide" was often regarded as the typical master-song of music; and though no one would now say anything of the kind, it is, of course, an extremely beautiful example of the elegant and dignified, if slightly stilted type, and was no doubt unjustly vituperated by its composer in his later years. But we see Beethoven in finer mood in the splendidly strong "Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur" (known to many concert-goers in English as "Creation's Hymn") and in the perhaps still greater, but little heard "Vom Tode"—



a gloomily impressive utterance of a kind not exemplified elsewhere in Beethoven's vocal music. The well-known "Busslied," if less subtle than these, is a very fine flowing song with a lofty tone running through both its contrasting portions; and the equally familiar "In questa tomba" (one of the considerable number written to original Italian words) is a massively expressive outburst of an unusually dramatic type. All these songs—masterpieces all, in their different ways—are of comparatively early date; but "An die ferne Geliebte" —a cycle of seven songs following one another without any sort of break of continuity—was written in 1816. This is no doubt Beethoven's finest lyrical effort, both structurally and otherwise, and is full of rich beauty from first to last: but even here we feel somehow that there is no very specially intimate connection between words and music. Though these are all of

Beethoven's songs that meet us in ordinary concert-programmes, yet there are several others of outstanding qualities that are far from negligible. "Ich liebe dich," "La partenza," "Mailied," "Mit einem gemalten Band," are very charming tunes of the simple straightforward type that never grows old-fashioned; and "Lamento amoroso," "Odi l'aura" (a duet), "Resignation," "Wonne der Wehmuth," "An die Hoffnung," and some others, are, in their different ways, well worthy of close study. But it must be confessed that many of the eighty-three songs with piano accompaniment that Beethoven has left us do nothing to add to his fame.

The numerous arrangements of folk-songs (English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish, and a few Italian), with accompaniment of piano, violin, and violoncello, are well-nigh unknown to most music-lovers, though they fill 365 pages in the complete edition of Beethoven's works. They were written at various times, chiefly in 1814–15, on commission from an Edinburgh publisher and zealous antiquarian named Thomson, who had also secured the help of Haydn, Pleyel, and other famous composers of the time. Though in many respects they are very

interesting, Beethoven shows the practically universal insensibility of musicians of his age towards anything like character.stic "local colour"; and the tunes (not always, indeed, unmangled by those who supplied him with what purported to be the original forms) emerge from his hands in purely Beethovenish dress. It must be confessed that the harmonisations are not always irreproachable, as, in apparent unfamiliarity with the tonality of Celtic music, Beethoven sometimes violently forces the tunes into moulds that do not fit them, and sometimes gives up the whole problem, and employs the not very satisfactory method of a fixed bass; and indeed occasionally his usual unerring instinct for purity of chord-writing seems to desert him altogether, in his hurry to get through what was certainly somewhat uncongenial though lucrative work. But, nevertheless, these arrangements are in many respects most interesting, apart from the loveliness of so many of the melodies. The ingenuity of the string writing is often very remarkable; and the long ritornelli and interludes, however unsuitable in folk-music, are in many cases of the utmost delicacy and finish. It is strange that, apart from "Faithfu' Johnie" (certainly

one of the most beautiful of all) so very few of them are ever heard; a full list of all the best would be impossible, but special attention might be drawn to the practically (to concert-goers) unknown beauties of the settings of "The Highland Watch," "The Elfin Fairies," "Oh Harp of Erin"—both settings, but especially the second—or "The Return to Ulster" (a most impressive thing). In our enjoyment of these and others, we may forget the empty or oddly tortured harmonies and inconsistencies of style that meet us elsewhere, and pass by such outlandish productions as the arrangement of "God save the King."

The few compositions for solo voices with orchestral accompaniment are headed by the superb soprano scena, "Ah, perfido!" one of the very finest examples of Beethoven's earlier style; it was written in 1796 for a famous prima donna of the Prague opera-house, but was not published till 1805. It is perhaps the finest concert-scena in existence, and the deep tenderness of the central *Adagio* is splendidly balanced by the passion and fiery exaltation of the other sections, all the shifting lights and shades of emotion being painted with a breadth and fidelity that show the natural strength of the com-

poser's dramatic instinct. Indeed, in a letter of later years he humorously presses for the provision of "a curtain or something" for the performance of the scena, remarking, with jesting exaggeration, that the work will be totally ruined in the absence of any flavour of the stage. The terzetto for soprano, tenor, and bass, "Tremate," is of slightly later date (1802), but is very much less remarkable, and indeed, though pleasant enough, lacks any real distinction; it was something of a favourite with Italian opera singers of the past generation, but is practically never heard now. The short "Elegischer Gesang" for four voices and strings (1814) is, however, of very different calibre: it was written to commemorate the death of the wife of Beethoven's intimate friend, Baron Pasqualati, and is throughout instinct with nobly dignified pathos, the closing bars being indeed as deeply touching and tender as any in all his works. This and "Ah, perfido!" certainly rank side by side as the crowns of the solo vocal music.

CHAPTER III

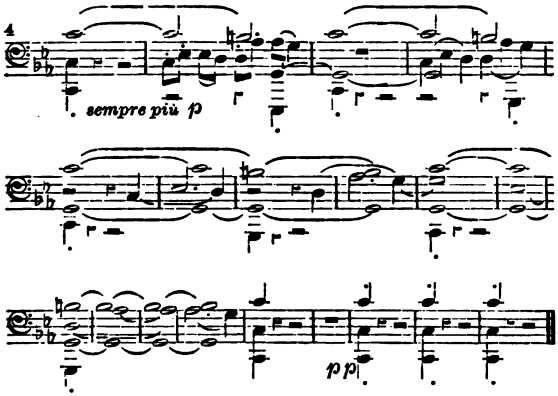
MUSIC CONNECTED WITH THE STAGE

APART from a small and entirely unimportant "Ritter Ballet," Beethoven's first work for the stage was the music to the ballet, "Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus," which dates from 1801. Its immediate popularity did much to smooth the way for him in Viennese circles, and he was proud of it himself, and used jokingly, with an obvious play on the words, to compare it with Haydn's "Creation" (*Die Schöpfung*). Nevertheless, it is impossible to place it on so high a level as that attained by many earlier works; it consists of a long string of pieces (overture, introduction, and sixteen incidental numbers), almost universally light-hearted and cheerful in tone, and without any particular depth of style or endeavour to do more than supply a pleasant addition to the stage pictures. The gay overture is the only portion that is at all frequently heard in English concert-rooms; but other

numbers are at least of equal value. The "Introduction," into which the overture should lead without break, is a curious sort of sketch for the far finer "Storm" in the Pastoral Symphony; and the finale contains the first appearance (unless a little Contretanz is earlier still) of the melody that is much better known in the pianoforte variations, Op. 35, and still more so in the finale of the "Eroica" Symphony. The harp-part in No. 5, and the long solos for the bassethorn in No. 14, are worth noticing as unique examples of the use of either instrument in Beethoven's works: perhaps, however, the most interesting numbers are No. 9, which strikes a rather deeper note than the rest, and No. 13, a very delightful movement, based on sparkling tunes of a purely Haydnesque character.

The Overture to "Coriolan" should be mentioned in this chapter, as it was written (in 1807) as a curtain-raiser to Matthias von Collin's play of that name. With its strong, restless, sombre passion, relieved only occasionally by gleams of wistful tenderness, it is one of the most grandly impressive of all Beethoven's orchestral works, though, strangely enough, it seems to have been more or less neglected till a

comparatively recent period. Structurally it shows several unusual features, and the *pianissimo* end—



where the fiery chief subject gradually fades and flickers into silence, is of a kind quite unique in music. Heroes of the type of Coriolanus and Egmont—the strong, misunderstood men, whose self-reliant energy is yet tinged from time to time with a certain softness—seem somehow to have had a special attraction for Beethoven.

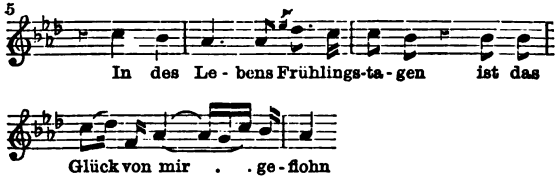
We now come to Beethoven's solitary opera, known at first as "Leonora," after its heroine's real name, but rechristened afterwards by her assumed name of "Fidelio," owing to the existence of other works with

the former title. When first produced in November 1805, it was in three acts, and the overture was that now known (merely through a publisher's error) as "Leonora No. 2"; it was afterwards reduced to two acts, and several alterations of different kinds were made, including the revision of the material of the original overture into the famous "Leonora No. 3," and in this form the work was reproduced in March 1806. It was then shelved for several years, the so-called "Leonora No. 1" overture (on different themes) being written in 1807 for a proposed performance at Prague which never came off. In 1814, however, the libretto was again subjected to considerable recasting, and much of the music was also largely rewritten, with the addition of the totally new overture, known as that to "Fidelio." The plot of the opera (which is *opéra comique* in the technical sense of the words—that is, a string of musical pieces divided by spoken dialogue) deals with the heroism of Leonora, wife of Florestan, who disguises herself as a boy and takes service with the gaoler of the prison in which her husband had been secretly immured by a private enemy, in order to effect his release, which is ultimately secured partly by her

own personal bravery and partly by the opportune arrival of the "Minister" in supreme charge: a "comedy relief" of somewhat incongruous character is supplied by the transference of the affections of the gaoler's daughter from her lover Jaquino to Fidelio, the supposed youth. It must frankly be confessed that now that a hundred years have elapsed, we cannot altogether avoid feeling the fetters of the structural conventionalities of the operatic methods current in Beethoven's day, and that we are obliged to make historical allowances that we never dream of thinking necessary with regard to instrumental music or vocal music apart from the stage. But taking the work, as we must, as primarily music and only secondarily drama, it of course contains innumerable beauties of all kinds. In the lighter vein we have the very delightful quartet in canon, "Mir ist so wunderbar," the respective airs of Marcellina and her father, the gaoler Rocco, and the sportive duet between Marcellina and Jaquino; in the vigorously ferocious style we have all the part of the villain Pizarro, and the delicately graceful "Prisoners' Chorus" and the final triumphant "Wer ein holdes Weib errungen" show master-

pieces of very different kinds. But the greatest music in "Fidelio" is concerned with the two protagonists — Leonora's splendid scena in the first act (musically the crown of the whole), Florestan's air at the beginning of the second act, with its deeply impressive instrumental introduction, the "grave-digging" scene of Leonora and Rocco, and the ecstatic duet of the reunited husband and wife; in these great pages Beethoven seems to shake himself free as far as possible from the limitations which make all opera, even in its latest shape, the most conventional, and in a sense the most inferior, of all musical forms. The *Leitmotiv* is, of course, not a thing of Beethoven's day; but it is nevertheless difficult not to see a connection between the place in Pizarro's first scena, where four bars of the same "diminished seventh" chord hammered over and over again accompany the villain's bloodthirsty rejoicings over his victim, and the long forcible insistence on exactly the same single harmony when his schemes have been defeated at the end of the quartet in the second act. The fourth overture (that to "Fidelio" in E) contains none of the music of the opera: the three "Leonora" overtures (all in the key

of C) are, however, a sort of transition between the method suggested by Mozart when inserting the "priests' chords" into the overture to "Die Zauberflöte" and that of Weber, and still more Wagner, where the whole of the main material recurs afterwards. In all three (though in slightly different forms) the melody of Florestan's "In des Lebens Frühlingstagen"—



appears; in Nos. 2 and 3 we have also a passing phrase heard during the last chorus and after the voices have ceased, the two trumpet-calls (varied in No. 2, exact in No. 3) which herald the arrival of the Minister and the consequent defeat and disgrace of Pizarro, and also, in No. 3 alone, a short melody that divides the two from each other, while in the coda of No. 1 Florestan's exclamation, "ein Engel Leonore," is amplified in triumphant shape. To these four overtures we may now turn.

The original overture is, as we have seen,

that known as "Leonora No. 2": it was
not published during its composer's lifetime,
though both score and parts were preserved
with a carefulness of a somewhat special
kind. Even now that we know No. 3, it
remains a very noble and beautiful work,
and the comparison between it and the still
greater masterpiece which superseded it is
a study of the most exceptional interest,
that can only here be dealt with very
cursorily. The main thematic material is
preserved in No. 3, but the structure i
radically altered. In No. 2 the slow in
troduction, the exposition portion of th
Allegro, and the development section a
all so large that there is little room f
anything more; there is no recapitulatio
at all and the coda is distinctly somewh
truncated. In No. 3 the introduction a
the first part of the *Allegro* are ster
compressed, there is a totally different a
much shorter development section, and
result is that there is room for a full
capitulation and a vastly more organ
coda, with a climax of stupendous grand
in the end No. 3 is no doubt the lo
of the two, but the balance of the de
is incomparably more perfect. Form i
fullest sense of the word (not the mecha

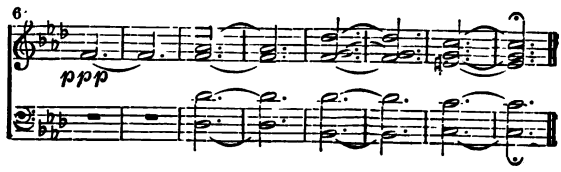
text-book artificiality to which the term is so often degraded) seems to have been absolutely paramount with Beethoven, and for its sake he was ready to sacrifice well-nigh everything. His pen was struck ruthlessly through all sorts of wonderful things, which vanished never to appear again, and in a sense we may even say that the first half of No. 3 is less directly impressive than that of No. 2: but the perfect work of art, we should never for a moment forget, is a whole and not a mosaic of isolated beauties, however great. What he threw away was restored to him a hundredfold, and however much we may ourselves dislike to draw up examination-lists among the immortal things, few would feel much inclined to quarrel with Sir George Grove's description of No. 3 as "surely the greatest work in the art." Why, we may well ask, did Beethoven write two more overtures afterwards? "Leonora No. 1" of 1807 is a bright and brilliant work, quite delightful, but not perhaps much more; the "Fidelio" overture of 1814 is full of very beautiful, breezy, open-air sort of music, "Beethovenish" down to the smallest details, but of a type as different to "Leonora No. 3" as could well be imagined (the composer's

first idea was, as some sketches show, to recast, in the key of E, No. 1 for this revival of the opera, though this plan—which would have been most interesting to study—never came to anything). Possibly Beethoven may have felt (with some contemporary critics) that No. 3 was too colossal a work to be a mere overture to an opera that is certainly, taken as a whole, considerably smaller in style; but this will not explain why he subsequently wrote both No. 1 and the "Fidelio" overture, and though the former is, on the whole, technically easier than No. 3, the latter is if anything the hardest of the four for some of the instruments. It may be indeed that the matter is one of pure accident or caprice rather than of any deep design; as a matter of fact, Beethoven seems to have acquiesced in the substitution of the "Prometheus" overture[1] for at any rate one of the early performances of the 1814 revival—which perhaps may lead us to the reflection that his standard of operatic congruity was not necessarily of the same kind as our own.

The music to Goethe's "Egmont" was

[1] Another authority says that to the "Ruins of Athens"; perhaps both were played on different occasions.

written in 1810, "merely out of love for the poem," as Beethoven wrote to a friend. It consists of an overture, four entr'actes, settings of Clärchen's two songs, a piece describing her death, a melodrama accompanying Egmont's dream, and a "Victory" Symphony which follows immediately on his last words. Characters of the type of Egmont — sombre resolution and strong dignity tinged with gleams of tenderness — had special attractions for Beethoven, and here, as in "Coriolan," he put forth his full strength towards their portrayal. The great overture is indeed one of his masterpieces; alike in the slow introduction, with its gloomy grandeur, in the *Allegro*, with its fiery passion and its momentary glimpses of wistful, gentle yearning, and in the ecstatically triumphant coda (identical with the "Victory" Symphony in the incidental music) the inspiration is as lofty and the touch as sure as in anything he ever wrote. The four wonderful slow *ppp* chords for the wind—



which divide the coda from the last wild outburst of the violins, have given much scope for fine writing to those persons who delight in smearing great music with descriptive labels; but it is quite unnecessary to imagine that they "mean" anything in particular, the flight of Egmont's soul to heaven or anything else. It is a pity that the overture has, for the concert-goer, altogether overshadowed the rest of the music; all of it is in the great style. The setting of "Die Trommel gerühret," with its fiery but girlish exaltation, is one of Beethoven's very finest songs; and nothing in all his music is more eloquently pathetic than the short *Larghetto* played as the lamp in Clärchen's room flickers and dies with her own life.

The incidental music to Kotzebue's play, "The Ruins of Athens," need not indeed detain us long; it was written in 1811, and consists of an overture and eight numbers. A good deal of it is distinctly poor, especially the final chorus, which is quite in Rossini's commonplace manner, with an end that (unintentionally) is almost comic; the chorus of dervishes, however, written in a sort of "Oriental style," is curious and striking, and the march and

chorus, "Schmückt die Altäre," has some interesting points. The best portions are a bass air, "Will unser Genius noch einen Wunsch gewähren" (sinking to a low C at the end), stately in character, with much prominent writing for four horns, and a very graceful chorus "Wir tragen empfängliche Herzen im Busen," that deserves to be rescued from its surroundings.

The music to Kotzebue's "King Stephen," dating from the same time as "The Ruins of Athens," is still less important than that; neither overture nor any of the incidental numbers need be regarded, and the work is now chiefly known as containing probably the cruellest passage ever written for choral sopranos, who, after leaping from the bottom D straight to the top B, are kept hard at work on the latter note and the adjacent A for twenty-two bars on end. The overture to Meisl's "Festspiel," "Die Weihe des Hauses," written for the opening of a new theatre at Vienna in 1822, is however decidedly more interesting. Largely fugal in character, it contains much that is finely individual and distinctive, and its many first-rate features make it quite undeserving of its present neglect. The vocal portions of the play consisted almost entirely of

numbers from the old "Ruins of Athens" music, accommodatingly supplied with different words—an economy of labour very frequent in the vocal works of both Bach and Handel (especially the former), but not discoverable elsewhere in those of Beethoven, except for a close version of the duet "O namenlose Freude" in "Fidelio" as a trio in an earlier unfinished and unpublished opera.[1]

[1] The music fits the first version better, as "namen, namenlose" is distinctly awkward: this is exactly parallel to the curiously tortured text of many movements in Bach's Masses adapted from earlier cantatas.

CHAPTER IV

ORCHESTRAL WORKS

THE first of Beethoven's nine symphonies, in C major, Op. 21, was produced at his first personally arranged concert in Vienna on April 2, 1800; it is not certain when it was written, but preliminary sketches for portions of it are found as early as 1795. It is not, on the whole, one of the outstanding works of the first-period style, though the *Andante cantabile con moto* is very delicate and graceful, with some original writing for the drum, and the Minuet (a pure Scherzo, like many of Haydn's Minuets) is a remarkably fine and individual little movement — far the greatest portion of the symphony. The finale consists of some enjoyably gay and childlike pages of a purely Haydnesque type: it is prefaced by a few bars of *Adagio* introduction, that contain nothing but a series of tentative and humorously apologetic attempts on the

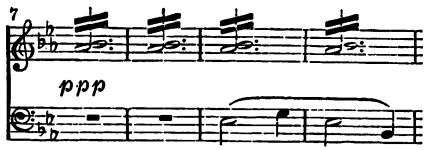
part of the first violins to play the quick scale that starts the regular first subject of the movement.

The second symphony in D major, dating from the close of 1802, is an altogether larger and greater composition, though, on the whole, rather less advanced than some contemporaneous works like the D minor pianoforte sonata. The first movement, with its lengthy introduction, is perhaps the least striking portion taken altogether; the *Larghetto* in A major, one of Beethoven's longest slow movements, is full of lovely sound and most delicate grace, but the greatest individuality is shown in the last two portions of the symphony. The Scherzo is a delightfully fiery and piquant outburst, full of point and vitality; and the brilliant energetic finale shows a great deal of typically Beethovenish development of tiny and apparently quite insignificant phrases, and also, in the quieter part of the coda, a largeness of conception that distinctly looks forward to the style of the later works.

Through these two symphonies—which most concert-managers, having the later ones to fall back on, are inclined to neglect overmuch—Beethoven felt his way to the

mature mastery of the third, in E flat, the "Heroic symphony composed to celebrate the memory of a great man." Its origin was due to a suggestion by the French Ambassador at Vienna that Beethoven should write a symphony to be dedicated to Napoleon, for whom, as the saviour of France from the horrors of the Revolution, Beethoven had a strong admiration; however, when the finished score, with Napoleon's name inscribed upon it, was just about to be forwarded to Paris, the news came that the First Consul had assumed the title of Emperor, and Beethoven, in a fit of passionate disappointment that his republican hero had fallen from his ideals, cancelled the dedication and gave the symphony its present title. The insertion of the Funeral March makes it obvious that Beethoven can never have intended the symphony to be in any definite sense a personal portraiture of Napoleon: yet anyhow there remains the difficulty of formulating suitable meanings for the third and fourth movements after the hero has been buried in the second, and the wildest and most ludicrous ideas have been put forward with apparent seriousness by many critics all through the last century.

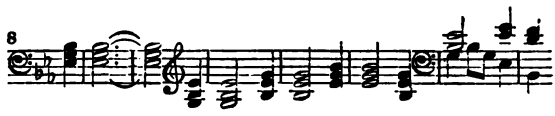
But after all there seems no real reason for all this beating of the air; if we look at the work as an artistic whole, it is easy to recognise its organic unity, and there is not any reliable evidence that Beethoven ever really meant more than that the symphony was throughout in the "grand style,"—thus distinguishing it from all his earlier orchestral writings. The "avowed design of the composition," of which an English critic of 1827 talks at much length, exists only in the minds of the curious people who decline to believe that great music is self-subsisting; and instead of cudgelling our brains to quite unnecessary fits of inventiveness, it is far better plainly and disinterestedly to admire the colossal music itself. The opening *Allegro con brio*—probably the longest first movement in all classical works—is extraordinarily spacious and noble in style, but the "heroism" does not exclude moods of tenderness and wistfulness, most of all at the end of the development-section, where the strength gradually fades away to mysterious murmurings of the violins, under which a horn sighs dreamily on a fragment of the chief subject—



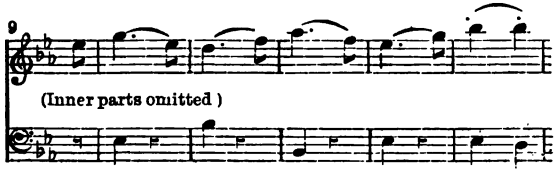
probably the most audacious passage in all great music from the harmonic point of view,[1] but surely one of the most magnificently successful. After this grandly massive opening movement the *Marcia funebre* is the inevitably right contrast—one of the crowning slow movements in all Beethoven's works, and charged throughout with a stern passionate sadness that music had certainly not known in full before this, though the *Largo* of the pianoforte sonata, Op. 10, No. 3, had given, some years before, much more than a hint of what its composer could do in this emotional field. After the tension of these mighty pages, a certain relaxation was no doubt artistically necessary; but the relaxation is only emotional, and the Scherzo is as great of its kind—a

[1] The passage has been called absurd, and actually altered, by men as great as Wagner and Berlioz, but from contemporary anecdotes it is clear that Beethoven was himself certain, even pugnaciously so, about the matter. And after all the "laws of composition" are merely generalisations from the ordinary practice of the great men, and not *a priori* abstractions useful for the justifying of inanities.

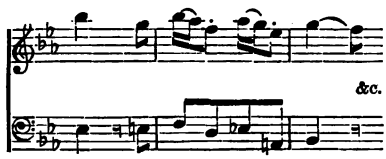
brilliantly busy movement, full of splendid dash and point, with a contrasting quiet trio, with three deeply impressive *soli* horns [1]—



So far the symphony is beyond any question one of the very greatest works of the second-period style, but the finale is something of a puzzle; we feel that it is organically of a piece with the rest, and yet the general level of inspiration is certainly not so lofty, splendid though much of the music is. It is designed on structural lines entirely unique in classical music. After some preliminary scale-passages ending in a pause we hear, by itself, the bass of the principal theme—



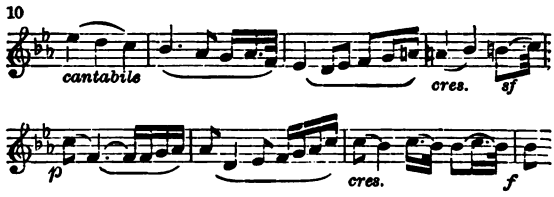
[1] The repeat of the Scherzo is, exceptionally, written out in full, merely for the sake of the alteration of the rhythm of a few bars from alternate crotchets and minims to even minims *alla breve*.



a melody previously employed by Beethoven in an early "Contretanz," as No. 16 of the "Prometheus" ballet-music, and as the subject of a set of pianoforte variations. Just as in the last-named work, the statement of the bass is followed by a few increasingly polyphonic variations upon it till the melody itself is heard; then follows a long development-section, principally concerned with the bass of the theme, but also to some extent with its melody, and introducing a new episodic subject in G minor, where, however, the first four notes of the original bass still persist. Finally, another pause leads to a *Poco andante*, a variation of the original melody, but expanded (though without any fresh material at all) and forming a most noble and dignified section, that fades away with some bars curiously (but perhaps unintentionally) similar to some in the March; and the symphony ends with a *Presto* coda based on the first four bars of the melody, and

starting with the same scale passages that at the beginning of the movement heralded its bass.

After the colossal "Eroica," the fourth symphony, in B flat, is apt to appear somewhat light and slender in style, but it is nevertheless one of the greatest of Beethoven's works of the happy and serene type. The *Adagio* that is introductory to the opening *Allegro vivace* strikes the only gloomy note in the whole symphony, and even here the sombreness is merely transient, while the quick movement that follows, after some delightful preparation as the tone gradually brightens, is brilliantly vivacious and cheerful, the very fine mysterious passage that leads up so splendidly to the recapitulation having a distinct element of humour about it after all. The *Adagio* in E flat is a great, calm, beautiful song—



with a persistent rhythmical accompaniment-figure that seems designed originally

for the drums, but is heard up and down through the entire orchestra; one of the most striking passages is just before the return to the chief subject, where, as the tonality gradually shifts round, this figure is heard first on the bassoon, then on the basses, and lastly on the drums, as the tonic key returns and the horns enter with one of the most beautiful and also most treacherous passages ever written for them.

The so-called Minuet (a Scherzo of the purest type) is a delightfully breezy movement with strongly marked cross-accents, and a delicate tender trio: by the repetition of this trio in full it is extended considerably beyond the usual limits, and it ends with a charming tiny coda, "just," as Schumann says, "for the horns to put one more question." But beautiful as the whole symphony is, in some ways the finale is the crown of all—cloudlessly sunny throughout and full of buoyant, youthful spirits which make us forget the extraordinary technical polish and organisation of the whole: specially "favourite places" are the gaily humorous flourish for the bassoon at the end of the "working-out," and the passage close to the finish when the first

subject is transformed by "augmentation" into a most touching little farewell.

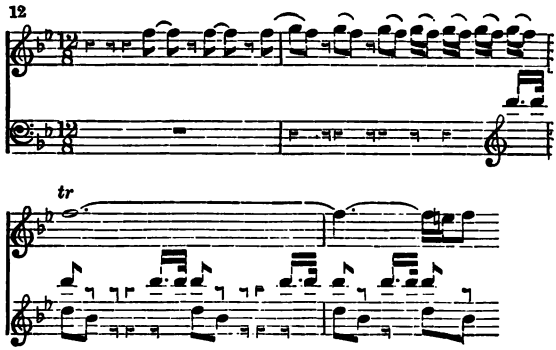
From this lovely, light-hearted work we pass to the stormy concentrated passion and fierceness of the first movement of the C minor symphony—a movement that is one of the supreme masterpieces in music, and seems more and more structurally wonderful and emotionally overwhelming the oftener we hear it; the four famous notes—

which are the germ of the whole, are said by Beethoven's biographer Schindler to have been suggested by the note of a bird —a strange origin for so tremendous a movement as this. The *Andante con moto* that follows, while not perhaps one of Beethoven's most outstanding slow movements, is extremely beautiful and expressive, and the fine strong outbursts act as a foil to the very touching and pathetic character of many portions. The Scherzo returns to the gloomy mood of the opening movement, but now the passion is dark and largely mysterious in tone, and the whole has a

strangely arresting quality that makes it one of the most fascinating and also, in a sense, awe-inspiring movements in music ; the trio in the tonic major key is a passing relief, but its humour is too volcanic and fierce to produce a real change of mood. The reappearance of the original section is, exceptionally, much more of a development than a repetition ; the mysteriousness grows more and more pronounced, and culminates in a long-drawn *ppp* chord of A flat, while the drum solo beats out rhythmical throbs, and gradually the harmony shifts and the violins creep upwards till a short explosive crescendo leads straight into the major finale. The closing *Allegro*, introduced in this extraordinarily impressive manner, is a splendid, strong, fiery piece, more heavily scored than any previous symphonic movement by any one (piccolo, double-bassoon, and trombones), and culminating in a hammering *Presto* coda ; at the end of the " working-out " a short reference to the material of the Scherzo in modified form produces a remarkable effect. But great as the whole work is, from the first page to the last, the Scherzo and the first movement are the portions that loom most largely in our memories when the C minor symphony is

mentioned, and it is those that have most of all placed it in its grand position in art.

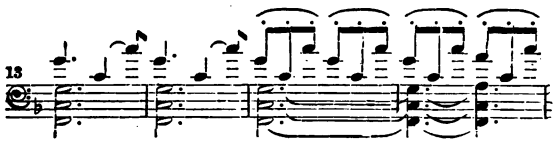
The sixth symphony, the "Pastoral" in F major, need not detain us here very long; the composer's "programme" and the deeply interesting questions arising from it will be more fitly discussed in a later chapter, when Beethoven's general views on the "meaning" of instrumental music are considered. The work is comparatively slight in tone, and in spite of all its many beauties is not one of Beethoven's most remarkable; the lovely slow movement, the "scene by the brook," is the finest portion, and is full of exquisite dreaminess, into which the famous labelled "imitations" of cuckoo, nightingale, and quail—



fit without any real artistic incongruity.[1] The opening movement, the "pleasant impressions on arriving in the country," is scored for a small orchestra, and is very quiet and placidly cheerful, with a great deal of repetition that is agreeably drowsy rather than monotonous; the Scherzo, the "merry gathering of the country people," is a sort of Dutch *genre* picture, very quaint and pleasant, which at the height of its boisterousness stops dead as a *pianissimo* D flat (a note entirely alien to the key of the previous movement) sounds on the basses, and the "Storm"—an extra interpolated section—begins. This a wonderfully vivid and picturesque bit of scene-painting, always fine as absolute music apart from its programme, and singularly lacking in the ordinary conventional chromatic scales and all the other stock ideas for musical storms; after the thunder and lightning have died away in the distance, some beautifully clear and bright major chords lead straight into the finale. This, entitled

[1] We have Beethoven's own word for calling them jokes; but the joking is very delicate and tender, clasped together by some of the loveliest bars in the movement, and structurally not at all out of place. Probably, had not the birds been "labelled," the passage would have attracted less criticism.

"Shepherds' song: joyful and thankful feelings after the storm," is considerably the least interesting movement in the last eight symphonies, although it contains some picturesque points, such as the muted horn close to the end. The "triple-pedal"—



at the opening sounded odd to the early critics, but seems quite ordinary now.

Several years elapsed before the composition of the seventh and eighth symphonies, both of which date from 1812. The seventh, in A major, is one of Beethoven's very greatest masterpieces; it is in many ways the most romantic of the symphonies, and though scored for a smaller orchestra than the third, fifth, sixth, or ninth, is full of colour from start to finish. It opens with a *Poco sostenuto* introduction, the longest and largest Beethoven ever wrote, and practically a complete extra movement in itself, based on a key-system which some critics have thought can be traced throughout the symphony, though it is, on the whole, more probable that these resemblances are

accidental; anyhow the opening is wonderfully spacious and noble in style, and the *Vivace* that follows (introduced by an E repeated fifty-four times up and down the scale and in different rhythmical aspects) is a splendidly imaginative movement crowded with picturesque beauties, and with a persistent rhythmical spring that can hardly be paralleled elsewhere. And indeed there is nothing to choose in greatness between all the movements—the wonderful wistfully impressive *Allegretto*, with its vague soft "six-four" chord at beginning and end, and its steady march-like measure —the splendid fiery Scherzo, with its deeply romantic contrasting trio[1]—the colossal finale, with its titanic force and humour, and its mighty swing like the stride of a jovial giant. Perhaps the A major is the most equal of all the symphonies, though it does not aim at that particular kind of emotional seriousness that we find in the third, fifth, and ninth; there are indeed

[1] As in the B flat symphony, the movement is extended by extra repetitions of both sections, but here the second appearance of the Scherzo, though identical in notes, is quite different dynamically; there is a well-known duet arrangement of the symphony which, most unaccountably, omits to reprint the music at all, and consequently entirely fails to represent the differences on repetition.

some musicians who have had the courage to call the finale vulgar, but probably they have been the kind of people who could not see the blazing vulgarity in, let us say, the religious music of a person like Gounod, and really, unless we are to use terms without attaching any meaning to them, we should refrain from even dreaming of epithets of that kind in connection with one of the very greatest movements even Beethoven ever wrote.

The eighth symphony, which, like the "Pastoral," is in the key of F major, is a great masterpiece that has had a curiously chequered career; it was one of its composer's favourite works, but took long to win its way, being most erroneously[1] looked upon as a return to an earlier style, and labelled with the idiotic title of the "Ballet" Symphony. In some ways, it is true, the work is not so immediately attractive as some others—there is a great deal of brusque wit and defiant forcefulness about it and there are few traces of either emotional grandeur or romantic beauty; but nevertheless on further acquaintance it develops

[1] Perhaps, partially, because the third movement is a Minuet in the old leisurely tempo; but the wine that is poured into the old bottles is very new indeed.

a most powerful fascination. The intensely individual character of the music, and the perfect polish and fitness of the details, gradually come to light; and the odd jests (like that at the end of the delicately playful *Allegretto scherzando* that stands in place of a slow movement) are seen to fall into their places as all parts of one whole. And indeed the finale is one of the supreme movements among the symphonies, structurally miraculous even for Beethoven (as, to take only one example among many, in the gradual "elucidation" of the at first incomprehensibly intruding *fortissimo* C sharp), and full of a wonderfully buoyant humour—not that of a youth, as in the finale of No. 4, nor that of a giant, as in the finale of No. 7, but that of a kindly, high-spirited man, with moods of tenderness and seriousness coming to the surface from time to time. For Beethoven in his solemn and deepest vein we must look elsewhere; but, like Whitman, he can say, "I am large, I contain multitudes."

More than ten years elapsed before the ninth and last[1] symphony, the "Choral," in D minor, saw the light; the full title "Symphony with final chorus on Schiller's

[1] A tenth was planned and to some extent put on paper.

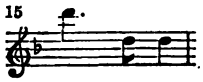
Ode to Joy," seems to indicate that the composer imagined no sort of definite connection between the first three movements and the choral finale, and indeed, at a very late stage in the composition of the work, he had the intention of writing a purely instrumental last movement with a chief subject that was afterwards used for the finale of the A minor string quartet. And further, it is related that some time after the symphony had been performed (though before its publication), Beethoven expressed to a circle of intimate friends his conviction that the whole idea of the vocal finale had been a mistake, and his intention to substitute an instrumental one instead—though indeed, so far as we know, he never seriously set to work to carry out this alteration. There is not, indeed, the very faintest glimmering of evidence for the statement that Beethoven introduced the chorus into this symphony because he thought the era of pure instrumental music was past; and even if he had imagined so (though the idea, besides being absolutely unwarranted, is really unthinkable), all that can be said is that the work itself supplies the refutation. Probably no musician in the eighty years that have elapsed has thought the finale,

in spite of the great central tune and the wonderful *Adagio* chorus, and the crowds of fine things scattered all about, anything like equal to the colossal first three movements, that represent Beethoven's genius in its very loftiest and most consistently inspired forms.[1] The idea of setting Schiller's "An die Freude" had, however, floated in his mind from time to time ever since the early days at Bonn, and sketches of all sorts and dates are extant; but out of the twenty-four quatrains he only uses nine, and the selection and arrangement of these gave him much trouble.

The first movement, *Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso,* is one of the topmost peaks in all music, with its colossal strength and dignity, and its deep passion and equally deep tenderness; the use made of the semiquavers of the severely splendid chief theme—

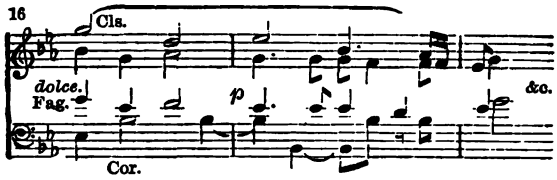
[1] A letter from Wagner to Liszt about the latter's "Dante" symphony (in which a chorus is introduced) is conclusive evidence as to the views of the one great man who is often cited as an exception.

is one of the most remarkable examples of Beethoven's power of developing short phrases.[1] And hardly if at all inferior is the Scherzo, Beethoven's greatest and longest, that here stands second in the scheme. Here again the persistent use of the rhythmical octave figure—



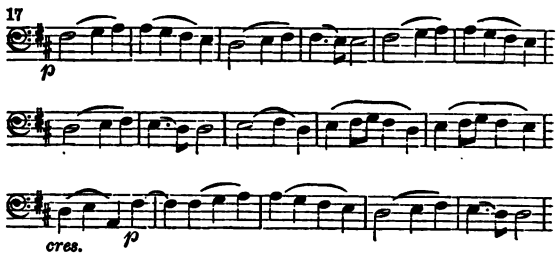
now as melody, now as bass, now in the middle of the harmony—is extraordinary; the splendid vigour of the music never flags for a moment, and the major "trio," in *alla breve* time, with its clear brightness, gives just the necessary contrast. And then we reach the slow movement, founded on a structural scheme of alternating sections of somewhat different character, for which there are several partial precedents in Haydn's works—the *Molto adagio* of the A minor quartet is a slightly later instance of Beethoven's own: throughout the mood is one of calm supremely noble dignity, and in the sort of dreamy fantasia on portions of the first theme—

[1] The famous "mistakes" here and in the finale will be discussed in a later chapter.



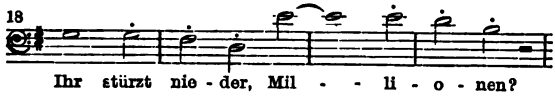
that divides the second appearance of the *Andante* from the third of the *Adagio*, we have one of Beethoven's most strange and wonderful pages—mystical, almost unearthly music, with a horn that speaks with almost human voice.

After these three glorious movements it is impossible to deny that a distinctly unpleasant shock is produced by the beginning of the finale, with its horribly harsh outbursts from the wind instruments, rebuked first with dignity and then with impatience by recitative-like passages on the violoncellos and basses, which also dismiss, one after the other, reminiscences from each of the three previous movements which the composer brings forward as if suggesting them for the finale. Finally the wind instruments announce a few notes of a new theme, which the basses welcome with loud applause; and so, after this very curious preface, we reach the main theme of the finale itself—



a splendid simple sweeping tune given out in severe unison, but soon acquiring more and more polyphonic treatment. This is developed for some little time till finally the original horrible outburst occurs again (every note of the minor scale is used in the first chord); but here the rebuke becomes articulate in the mouth of the bass soloist, and with his words, "O Freunde, nicht diese Töne: sondern lasst uns angenehmere anstimmen, und freudenvollere!", we reach the vocal portion of the finale. This transition gave Beethoven, as the sketches show, very great trouble, and he tried and rejected all sorts of words to bridge over the gap; it is obvious that, as we have it now, the whole conception of this preface to the main portion of the movement, is, so to speak, dramatic. The finale is not at all, as it is often called, a

set of variations in the ordinary sense of the words, though the variation-element enters into it: in the first quartet and chorus the tune (that we may call No. 1) is practically unchanged altogether, and the only movement that can be called a variation (and that a very elementary rhythmical one) is the tenor solo and male voice chorus movement in B flat—a showy sort of military-band movement, with big drum and triangle and cymbals, and an almost entire absence of strings. The *Andante maestoso* chorus in G major is founded on a quite new short phrase, that may be called No. 2—



and the *Adagio ma non troppo, ma divoto* in G minor that follows—far the greatest portion of the finale, and mystical and impressive in the very highest degree—is quite independent. Then we are hurled forcibly back into the light of day with a steadily *fortissimo* chorus based on Nos. 1 and 2 combined in double counterpoint; then follows a quartet and chorus derived from portions of both Nos. 1 and 2 but with much

fresh material, and by a very elaborate and beautiful cadenza for the four solo voices we pass to the final *Prestissimo*, based chiefly on a sort of variant of No. 2, and the work ends with the screams of more or less exhausted sopranos and one hundred and twenty-seven rapid bangs on the big drum and cymbals.

In spite of the supremely noble *Adagio*, and very many other great things up and down, it is difficult for a reflecting musician not to regret that Beethoven abandoned the idea of an instrumental finale on the great tune afterwards used for the finale of the A minor quartet: a good many pages are simply dull, and the boisterousness with which the words are often set has hardly any element of the grandeur of masterpieces like the finale of the A major symphony, and occasionally indeed comes as perilously near mere convivial joviality as great music can. It is as idle to deny this as it is to deny the overwhelming majesty of every page of the first three movements.

There remain for notice two orchestral compositions, excluding those connected with the stage, which have already been discussed in Chapter III.

"Wellington's Victory, or the Battle of

Vittoria," written in 1813, is a curious work, that it is difficult to take very seriously; probably Beethoven himself would never have dreamt of such a thing, but he was commissioned to write it as a sort of "patriotic pot-boiler" by Mälzel, the inventor of the metronome, and a man with business-like views untrammelled by non-financial considerations—or indeed, according to Beethoven's own opinions, which went to the length of legal proceedings, by considerations of common honesty. The work was originally designed for a mechanical instrument called the Panharmonicon, and was afterwards orchestrated by its composer for concert-performance; it caught the popular taste both in Austria and in England, and was, it is painful to reflect, one of its composer's best-known compositions. It has an elaborate preface, in which Beethoven lays down careful rules as to the employment of machines for representing both cannon and rifle-fire, both on the French and English sides, and gives other directions for the production of the proper sensational effects. It is specially desired that the cannon-machines shall be played by very good musicians, and indeed they are marked in the score

to go off in the most irregular manner: but it is more than doubtful if any real difference would result if their "players" never looked at the score at all. Towards the end of the battle, however, the English cannons are heard alone, as the tumult dies away with "Malbrook" sounding gloomily in the minor key—the one touch of something like real music in the whole vulgar movement. The second part consists of a "Victory" Symphony, in which much use is made of "God save the King"; it contains a few pages of moderate interest, and is anyhow much superior to the first part, but the whole work is very justly practically dead, though it has been performed once or twice of late years.

The Overture in C major, Op. 115, dating from 1814, is a work of no special importance, though vigorous and effective; its chief interest lies in the fact that it is the finished outcome of some sketches for a setting of Schiller's "Ode to Joy," which (as we have just seen) occupied Beethoven's thoughts off and on for many years before the Choral Symphony. The composer never gave the work any title, but it is now commonly known as the "Namensfeier" Overture, perhaps because it was finished (as Beet-

hoven notes) on the "name-day" of the Emperor, perhaps because it was first produced at a concert on Christmas-day, 1815 —it seems quite certain that it was not written in intentional view of any festival at all. At the second performance it was announced as a "Hunting" Overture, and was long known under that name in France, Germany, and Austria: Beethoven tried his hardest to discover who was responsible for this quite unauthorised piece of imaginativeness, but he was baffled by the anxiety of all the members of the concert-committee to throw the blame on anybody but themselves.

CHAPTER V

MUSIC FOR SOLO INSTRUMENTS WITH ORCHESTRAL ACCOMPANIMENT

THE first of the five concertos for pianoforte and orchestra is so numbered accidentally; though published before that known as No. 2, it is no doubt later in order of composition. This work, in C major (Op. 15) is unjustly overshadowed by its three greater successors; it is a delightful work, not everywhere, it is true, perfectly individual, but full of touches of the real Beethoven, and singularly charming in sound. The second part of the development-section of the opening *Allegro* is notably fine, the *Largo* (very like the *Adagio* of the pianoforte sonata, Op. 10, No. 1, in its general mood) contains some beautiful decorative writing, and the finale, based on a charming subject in irregular rhythm—

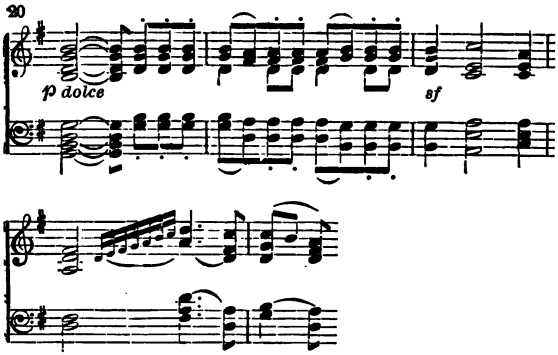
19

is one of the most graceful and delicately polished movements of the first period. Perhaps a word of warning is necessary to the reader unprovided with the authoritative edition of the score of this concerto: there is a version issued by one of the best-known and (as a rule) most justly popular of publishing firms which prints, without the least explanation, the most inartistic and absolutely unnecessary variations of numberless passages in the solo part—the kind of thing of which no doubt many well-known players are guilty, but which is none the less absolutely indefensible.

The second Concerto in B flat (which is really, as has been said, the first) is a far inferior work, and shows but few traces of its composer's genius; perhaps the most striking portion is the expressive recitative-like section at the end of the slow movement, which is built on a more or less improvisatory kind of structure of a type not uncommon with Haydn, but very rare in the works of other classics. Finer in every respect than this work, and also indeed than the C major, is the third Concerto in C minor, though it still essentially belongs to the first-period manner: throughout it is transparently clear and direct in style, and

full of delicate beauties. The first movement is the standard orthodox example of what may be called "text-book concerto-form," which, in the very complete and somewhat square shape that is shown here, is really not at all common among the classics; the "second solo" is especially charming, and the little coda after the usual interpolated cadenza (with the solo drums on a figure from the first subject, prominent at many places throughout the movement) is very individual and striking. The *Largo*, in the somewhat unusual though not unprecedented key of E major, is a very graceful movement of delicately expressive decorative character; and the Rondo finale is a cheerfully gay conclusion to the whole, with many original touches and a brilliance of a pleasantly happy type.

But these three works are altogether cast into the shade by the remaining two pianoforte concertos, the first of which (No. 4 in G major) dates from 1805, and is one of the most imaginative and romantic of all Beethoven's works. The first movement opens with the wonderful chief subject given out by the pianoforte solo—

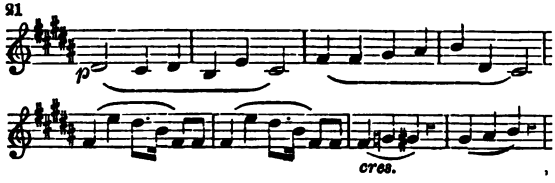


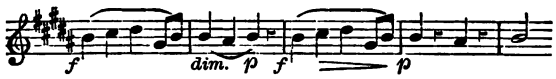
which is afterwards silent till the conclusion of the ordinary long introductory *Tutti*—a formal innovation for which there is a partial precedent in an early concerto of Mozart. Throughout the writing for the solo instrument is, even when most brilliant, more intimately organic than was the case in the first three concertos, and the whole movement is full of extraordinarily beautiful light and shade and romantic touches. Even more remarkable, however, is the short *Andante con moto* in E minor; only the strings of the orchestra are employed, and throughout the greater part of the movement they keep up a sort of half-dramatic dialogue with the pianoforte—the strings in octaves, fierce and rough, the

pianoforte *una corda, molto espressivo*, with wonderfully melting, speaking harmonies. This movement is, both formally and materially, of a type quite unique in classical music: it has, naturally enough, given rise to a large number of "descriptions," but though many of these (such as Schumann's picture of Orpheus taming the brutes) may be harmless enough, yet they are all entirely unnecessary, and do nothing to add to the impressiveness of these intensely poetical pages. The concluding Rondo is a worthy crown to the concerto—most romantic and varied throughout, with delicate tenderness and delicate humour, and a splendid open-air breeze blowing through the whole: except in the hands of the bludgeoning virtuoso brought up on nothing but Liszt and Rubinstein, there is no concerto in music which gives more unalloyed finely artistic pleasure to the listener.

Side by side with this great work stands the equally great concerto in E flat, written four years later—the former, if we may perhaps so say, the expression of the more feminine side of perfect music, the latter the expression of the more masculine; it has sometimes been called the "Emperor" Concerto, but the title is entirely mean-

ingless as well as unauthorised. The first movement shows two noteworthy innovations in classical concerto-form—one the sort of "formal introduction," consisting of some finely organised but quite non-thematic brilliant passages for the solo instrument preparatory to the exposition of the material in the ordinary *Tutti*, and the other the entire abolition of the customary interpolated cadenza in favour of something which is really nothing but a largely expanded coda, though it starts (as would a cadenza) with passages for the solo instrument after a pause on a six-four chord. The whole movement is throughout of splendid nobility and dignity of style, and full of rich, warm beauty—all elements that are equally present, though in different aspects, in the *Adagio un poco mosso* in B major, a most deeply felt and expressive movement in somewhat unusual form, based on a principal tune of wonderful solemn loveliness—





A transition of singular impressiveness, both as regards harmony and orchestral colour, leads straight to the Rondo finale—a magnificently powerful and dashing movement, with a great strong central theme, and full of touches of the most picturesque character, such as the soft duet for pianoforte and drum just before the final outburst.

In 1814 a sixth pianoforte concerto was started, but never finished, though extensive sketches exist, and some sixty pages were fully scored: the opening is extremely fine, and it is not known why Beethoven abandoned it after going so far. The only other work for pianoforte and orchestra is the so-called Choral Fantasia, which may be perhaps most fitly noticed in this chapter, as the vocal element is but small: it consists of a lengthy introduction for pianoforte solo of improvisatory character (added just before publication—at the first performance the introduction was literally extemporised by the composer), and a series of variations of very different styles and dimensions, end-

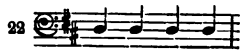
[1] Printed in Nottebohm's great collection "Zweite Beethoveniana."

ing in a finale where the theme is given out by the chorus (with a few bars for solo voices) and expanded to a brilliant finish. The work itself dates from 1808, but the theme of the variations is taken from a very early song " Gegenliebe "—the original words of which have nothing to do with those of the Fantasia, which are taken from a somewhat poor poem in praise of music by Kuffner. The structure is interesting as being a kind of preliminary experiment in the direction of the Choral Symphony, but the composition, though delightfully clear and pleasant and containing some fine pages, is of comparatively secondary importance.

Beethoven's compositions for solo violin and orchestra are three in number [1]—the two Romances in G major and F major, very graceful and melodious works that have for a hundred years been, very justly, probably the best-known of all short violin pieces by great composers, and the magnificent Concerto in D major, that stands side by side with the last two for pianoforte, and dates from about the same period. It

[1] A fragment of the first movement of an early Concerto in C major has been completed by Hellmesberger, and published; but it is of very little interest.

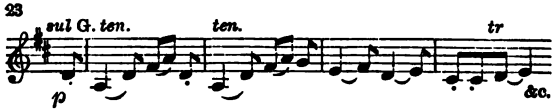
is the *cheval de bataille* of all violinists; and if it has suffered even more than most classical concertos from the caprices of soloists who apparently consider any knowledge of other parts than their own entirely superfluous, not even the worst playing can hide the grandeur and beauty of every page. The most astonishing feature of the splendidly broad and noble first movement is the use made of the reiterated four crotchets heard at the outset on the solo drum —



They occur in ever-varying though always more or less prominent shape on practically every page of the score, and are well-nigh continuous in the latter part of the development-section—an amazingly impressive passage that is too often ruined by the entire inability of many virtuoso violinists to play decorative passages in any sort of strict rhythm. The *Larghetto* is in the key

[1] No doubt the earliest use of the drum as a strictly "thematic" instrument, so to speak: the opening of Bach's "Christmas Oratorio," though often cited, is not really a parallel, as this first chorus is an adaptation from an earlier secular cantata, "Tönet, ihr Pauken," where the drums are obviously in a position of natural and inevitable prominence.

of G major throughout, and is cast in somewhat unusual form; it is one of the loveliest and most dreamily haunting of all Beethoven's slow movements, and leads without break into the finale, the movements being only divided by a short pause for an interpolated cadenza (the second of the three in this concerto). The concluding Rondo is a massively vigorous swinging movement, with a central theme—



of a sort of great strong humour that is nevertheless full of spaciousness and nobility: it is of quite a different type to the finales of the last two pianoforte concertos, but all three of these works are completely balanced masterpieces that never flag for a moment from the first page to the last.

The only remaining work to be dealt with in this chapter is the "Triple Concerto" in C major for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello, written in 1805 (probably as a *pièce d'occasion* for Prince Lobkowitz and his friends) and, apart from a few passages in the finale, of very slight interest: it is the

only concerto for this combination by any classical composer, and it cannot be said that the great structural difficulties involved have been at all successfully met in this by no means unjustly neglected production.

CHAPTER VI

CHAMBER-MUSIC WITHOUT PIANOFORTE

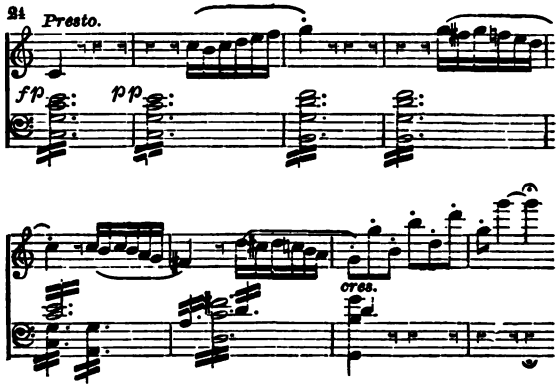
IN his earlier years Beethoven showed a great partiality, which he afterwards completely lost, for wind instruments in chamber-music: some of these works were published many years later, but they all, there can be but little doubt, date from the Bonn period or the very first years at Vienna. It is easy to see in them the influence of Mozart's Serenades and Divertimenti, alike in the choice of instruments and in the large number of movements which many of them possess: but few are of any importance now, though some are occasionally performed. There is a trio for the curious combination of two oboes and English horn, three duos for clarinet and bassoon, and a sextet for clarinets, horns, and bassoons: rather more interesting than these are a wind octet (with a very charming minuet), a sextet for strings and horns, and a serenade for flute, violin, and viola,

but the best of all is a very pretty and delicate Rondino for oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons—a delightful little work which should be heard oftener than it is.

Apart from three short *Equali* for four trombones (1812), which are frequently played at public funerals and similar solemnities, the only remaining work of this kind to be noticed here is the septet for violin, viola, violoncello, double-bass, clarinet, horn, and bassoon (Op. 20)—a work of which its composer was at first very proud, and in later years very ashamed. We need not now subscribe to either of these extreme opinions; but, in spite of the splendidly fiery little Scherzo and many other beauties, there is no denying that it is far less individual than many earlier works, and contains things (such as the otiose violin twirlings in the finale) which must have much annoyed Beethoven afterwards. Its popularity has no doubt chiefly been due to its rich volume of sound and its straightforward cheerfulness; and its composer's own transient pride in it probably sprang from the undoubted fact that, from the spectacular point of view, it was the largest work written by him up to that time.

Mozart had shown considerable partiality for the string quintet (with two violas, not —as usually in still earlier times—two violoncellos); but Beethoven, though adopting Mozart's selection of instruments, wrote very little for this combination. He made arrangements of the wind octet just mentioned, and of the C minor pianoforte trio (Op. 1, No. 3), but otherwise (apart from a short and quite unimportant fugue) all we have in this form is the quintet in C major, Op. 29[1]: this, however, is one of the greatest works of the first period, at the very end of which it stands, and is crowded from start to finish with beauties of all kinds. In the first three movements we specially notice the simple but splendid breadth and dignity of the chief subject of the opening *Allegro moderato*, the rich melodiousness of the *Adagio molto espressivo*, and the fiery and marvellously closely knit Scherzo—one of Beethoven's finest: while the finale is of a type quite unique in the composer's works. It is his only example of a chamber-music movement containing a great deal of continuous tremolo accompaniment—

[1] The very last known sketches, however, are concerned with the themes of another quintet in the same key.



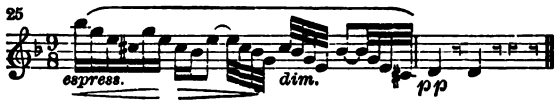
a device to which Mendelssohn was very partial, but which nearly always produces an uncomfortable quasi-orchestral effect quite foreign to the genius of this particular medium — in this special case, however, probably owing to simple but subtle part-writing, the result sounds perfectly natural and inevitable. Variety is also afforded by the intrusion twice over of a short *Andante con moto e scherzoso* of a sober and humorously didactic character; and there is a delightful page of strict triplè counterpoint, where all the subjects tumble head over heels with charming irresponsibility. The quintet is sometimes, by those persons who will have labels at all costs, called "The

Storm" ; but there is emphatically nothing stormy about these bubbling outbursts of joyous exhilaration.

Before reaching the main subject of this chapter, we may cast a passing glance on the string trios—all of early date, but interesting not only for the many beauties they contain, but also for their singular technical mastery over a very difficult medium, where emptiness of sound is a perpetual danger. The E flat trio (Op. 3) and the Serenade-Trio (Op. 8) are both charming works after the model of Mozart's Divertimenti ; the three trios (Op. 9), on the ordinary four-movement plan, are, however, of considerably more importance. In the first, in G major, we specially notice the long-drawn melodiousness of the *Adagio*, and the gay (and rather Mendelssohnian) sparkle of the delightful finale : in the second, in D major, perhaps the graceful minuet is on the whole the most striking portion. The third, in C minor, is, taken altogether, probably the finest of the three ; it has a fire and passion that the others do not seek, and does not fall short of them in beauty of sound. This is a little group of great interest, but Beethoven never recurred to the medium ; probably he felt

that, even with his technical mastery, it was too small for his later ideas.

Of string quartets Beethoven wrote sixteen, not counting the "Grosse Fuge" originally intended for the finale of the thirteenth: there are six of the first period, four of the second, one a transition between second and third, and five of the composer's very last works—making altogether one of the great groups not only in Beethoven's but in the world's music. The first six were published together as Op. 18 in 1801; it is not exactly known when each of them was composed, but it seems certain that the numerical order is not the chronologically correct one. The first quartet, in F major, contains what is perhaps the deepest and greatest movement in all the six—an *Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato*, full of a wonderfully lofty and sad tenderness, altogether one of the very finest of the earlier slow movements, and in many ways—as in the strangely touching closing phrase—



forecasting much later styles: in the quick movements (especially in the opening one)

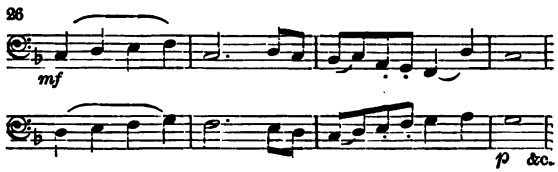
we have notable examples of Beethoven's power of developing short and at first glance comparatively insignificant phrases, and the whole quartet is one of the greatest interest. The second, in G major, is a beautiful work of consistently happy tone, even the slow movement being interrupted by a bright little *intermezzo* of a lively character, that springs with delightful naturalness out of the codetta phrase of the main portion: in several other respects, especially in the recapitulation and coda of the first movement, the structural design shows enterprising and original features, and the gay Scherzo is one of the most light-hearted Beethoven ever wrote. The third quartet, in D major, seems somehow to be much less frequently heard in public, but it is certainly not in any sort of way at all inferior; it is somewhat "older" and quieter and more reflective in tone as a whole, though without any of the sombreness that we find in the F major, and though perhaps less immediately striking than some of the rest of the six, becomes on further acquaintance certainly one of the best loved of all—in the tranquilly humorous insistence on the first three quavers which start the theme of the finale we see clear foreshadow-

ings of the more developed employment of the same device in movements like the finale of the much later E minor quartet and many others. The fourth, in C minor, is the most brilliant and dashing of the set, vigorous and powerful, with (especially in the finale) a busy rapidity of motion that, without the least similarity of notes, is curiously retrospective of a frequent mood of Haydn; the substitution (as in the pianoforte sonata, Op. 31, No. 3) of a daintily humorous Scherzo, *Andante quasi allegretto*, for the usual slow movement and the perhaps unique direction that the Minuet, when, as is customary, repeated after the Trio, shall be played faster than before, are interesting features among many others. The fifth quartet, in A major, which is one of the less often played, is in general mood somewhat akin to the third, and the working-out of the chief subject of the finale follows the same general plan; it is full of quiet beauties, especially in the exquisite *Andante* variations, the fourth of which is one of the most impressive pieces of subtly rich harmony in all the early works of Beethoven. The sixth quartet, in B flat, is probably the most frequently performed of all, though it is hard to say why it should be, as to

very many musicians it seems on the whole the least interesting and characteristic of the set; on internal evidence of structural and other points it would appear to be the earliest, but with Beethoven, as with any other creative artist, purely internal evidence is a very unsafe guide unless interpreted in a distinctly broad spirit. The vigorously effective Scherzo is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, but with a curiously persistent cross-rhythm that does its best to persuade us that it is really in $\frac{6}{8}$, and its trio is built on a subject that looks rather like a mere variant of the other, though it is doubtful if this resemblance is more than a coincidence—if it is intentional, it is the only example of such a thing in Beethoven's works. The lively finale is prefaced by a very expressive *Adagio* introduction of some length, headed "La Malinconia," which recurs in shorter form in the middle of the quick movement.

With the three great quartets, Op. 59, dedicated to Count Rasoumowsky, the Russian ambassador at the Austrian court, we enter a different field: they are far larger in scope and style, and altogether are among the outstanding masterpieces of the "second period." Out of compliment to the Count, Beethoven introduced a couple

of folk-tunes into the quartets, labelling each of them "thème russe"—these are the only acknowledged instances of such borrowing in his works, though, as we shall see in a later chapter, others have been suspected. However, they emerge from his hands in a dress as purely Beethovenish and as little Slavonic as can well be imagined, and indeed the composer has absolutely and flagrantly disregarded both the tonalities and the emotional characteristics of the tunes as represented in the collection from which he undoubtedly derived them. Though all musicians have their favourites, yet probably most of them would unite in considering the "first Rasoumowsky," in F major, as on the whole the greatest of the second-period quartets in quality as it certainly is in quantity. The opening *Allegro* is one of Beethoven's most nobly broad and spacious movements, with much remarkably deliberate harmonic motion, seen most of all in the magnificent chief tune—



which is built simply on two harmonies, the tonic for six bars and a half, and the dominant for the whole of the rest of the full eighteen : it is followed by an *Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando* (standing in place of the ordinary Scherzo), which is based on a very large and unusual design, and is full of a singularly fascinating sort of humour, sometimes playful, sometimes soothing, sometimes brusque. The *Adagio molto e mesto* in F minor is one of the kings among its composer's slow movements—charged with intense pathos and tenderness, with one solitary *molto cantabile* major theme of unspeakably touching beauty—

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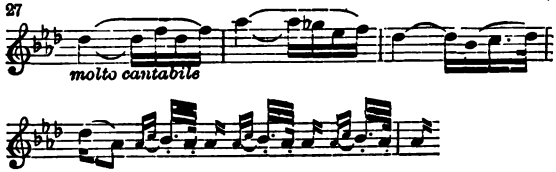

It leads without pause into the massively vigorous and powerful finale, based on an energetic melody—

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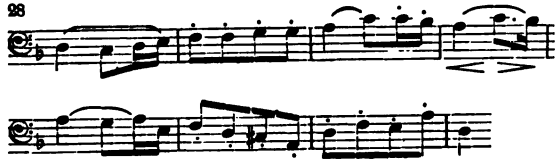
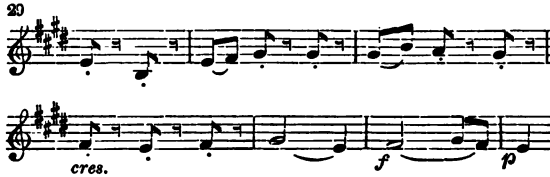


identical only in mere notes with the slow, sombre, minor strain in Iwan Pratsch's collection, from which it was taken. The second quartet, in E minor, is not a whit inferior, with its splendidly dark and passionate opening movement (much akin in general style to that of the so-called "Appassionata" sonata), its long-drawn, serenely lovely *Molto adagio*, that in many ways foreshadows some of the most beautiful features of the third-period style, its half-sad, half-playful *Allegretto* (in the major trio of which the second Russian folk-tune—



appears, again in much quickened guise), and its *Presto* finale, full of wild humour and almost boisterous energy, with a chief subject that seems always defiantly trying to be in C major instead of in the proper E minor. The third quartet, in C major, though it does not touch the emotional depths reached by its two companions, is also a very great work, making a singularly direct appeal, and with a consistent clearness and lucidity of style that is only

momentarily dimmed by the very remarkable slow introduction to the first movement—a strange collection of magically shifting harmonies, *sempre pp*, and in nearly all keys except the one indicated by the signature. But this mysterious opening strikes the only gloomy note in the work: the *Allegro vivace* that follows, with its wonderful developments of an insignificant-looking phrase of two notes, is bright daylight throughout, and the exquisitely graceful and delicate *Andante con moto quasi allegretto*—that sounds like a prophetic forecast of some of the most characteristic moods of both Schubert and Mendelssohn—is more tenderly wistful than sad. The third movement is a Minuet and Trio of the older statelier type which Beethoven almost entirely abandoned in favour of the quicker Scherzo: it leads without break into the finale, that is Beethoven's first and perhaps most successful example of the combination of fugal texture with binary form — a brilliantly vigorous movement that is practically a *moto perpetuo*, full of colour and life, and ending in a subtly organised and most exciting climax.

The next quartet, in E flat (Op. 74), is another very beautiful work of different type. The first movement, introduced by

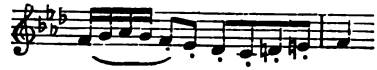
a short expressive *Adagio*, is technically remarkable in several ways: the numerous prominent *pizzicato* arpeggios (from which the popular title of "Harp-quartet" has been derived) are of a type quite unknown elsewhere in chamber-music, and the brilliant "solo-writing" for the first violin in the coda is Beethoven's only, and very successful, excursion in a dangerous field where most other composers have lost sight altogether of the proper limitations of quartet-music. The development-section, too, is of an unusual type, with its great insistence on rhythmical figures that have little thematic importance, but are nevertheless treated in a way that makes them sound absolutely essential parts of the whole. The slow movement is a very expressive and flowing example of the happy rather than the poignant type (the echoing of the codetta-phrase of the theme—

is a curiously Mendelssohnian feature very rare in Beethoven's works[1]): and the *Presto*

[1] The phrase is indeed found nearly note for note in the same relative position in the *Adagio* of Mendelssohn's Scotch Symphony.

Scherzo (not so entitled) is a splendidly strong and vigorous minor movement, with a still more dashing *Più presto quasi prestissimo* Trio in the major. Both Scherzo and Trio are repeated alternately, and then the Scherzo is heard for the third time, but now is, with very remarkable effect, *pianissimo* throughout after the first eight bars, and very deliberately and impressively modulates round to the key of the finale, which follows after a half-close: this is a set of variations, alternately expressive and energetic, and six in number, with a coda containing (as often) suggestions of several more. Specially beautiful features are the lovely viola melody in the second, and the impressive sixth variation on a pedal-bass.

The quartet in F minor (Op. 95) occupies a position between the second and third periods, and indeed shares in some of the finest characteristics of both. The opening *Allegro con brio*, very terse in design and comparatively short, is one of the most deeply felt and passionate movements among the quartets, and is indeed one of its composer's grandest inspirations; the end, where the wild semiquaver phrase of the chief subject—

31 

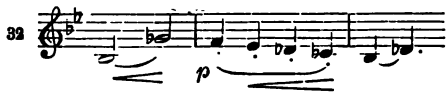
gradually fades into cold unisons that leave the last harmony unresolved, is one of the most striking in all his works. The rest consists of a quietly expressive *Allegretto ma non troppo* that forecasts much in the later quartets, a passionate gloomy *Allegro assai vivace ma serioso* that stands in place of the Scherzo, and a finale of a restlessly yearning character, till a ray of sunshine comes with a wonderful *ppp* major chord, and the great work ends with a gracefully brilliant, short, quick coda—different in character from all the rest, yet somehow not sounding at all alien.

The five last quartets (in E flat, Op. 127, in B flat, Op. 130, in C sharp minor, Op. 131, in A minor, Op. 132, in F major, Op. 135), form a group by themselves: they are among the greatest and most typical examples of the third-period style, which will be considered in full detail in a later chapter. Structurally they are most remarkable in many ways, and apart from features more or less common to all third-period works, it is noticeable that in Op. 130, Op. 131, and Op. 132 we see in the extra

number of movements reminiscences (invisible since Beethoven's quite early days) of the scheme of Mozart's Divertimenti and similar works. Op. 127 is the only one of these quartets that was published during the composer's lifetime, and the others were accidentally numbered in wrong sequence: in real chronological order the A minor stands first and is followed by the B flat, C sharp minor, and F major, with the present substituted finale of the B flat quartet at the end of all.

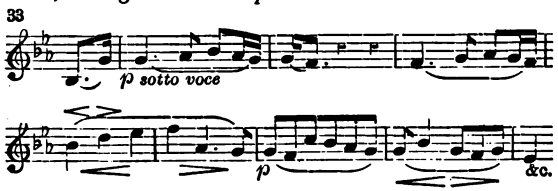
The quartet in E flat, Op. 127, the first of this wonderful group, dates from 1824, fourteen years after the F minor. The opening *Allegro* is prefaced by a few bars *Maestoso*, which recur several times in the course of the movement, and is largely of a tranquil and reflective character with richly complex harmony: the *Adagio ma non troppo e molto cantabile* that follows is a set of variations on a broad theme of long-drawn flowing beauty, which differ in character, but all show the same subtle and at first somewhat elusive features, and the same wealth of quiet sound. The *Scherzando vivace* is a brilliantly freakish movement, with continual insistence on a staccato figure in dotted rhythm that is worked in all sorts

of shapes: the finale that follows (which, like that of the violin concerto, is without any heading of tempo or expression) is a very interesting structural compound of binary form with features more often found in rondos — for example, the long coda starting in an alien key and in different rhythm—and is, moreover, extremely individual in thematic material. In some respects, however, the B flat quartet touches greater heights and depths, and in its six movements we have glimpses of many of Beethoven's most characteristic moods. The opening movement is one of his most fascinating compounds of brusque energy and deep feeling, with its wonderful "second-subject" melody that passes like a vision—



and its very terse development-section, founded nearly entirely on a phrase of two notes derived from the introductory (and often recurring) *Adagio:* and after this we have an extraordinary little *Presto* in B flat minor—an intensely fiery but self-contained outburst which is one of its composer's most impressive miniatures — an

Andante that is half-playful, half-tender, and a *Danza alla tedesca* (originally meant for the A minor quartet) that is a sort of beautiful glorification of the popular Ländler dance-rhythm. The fifth movement, a Cavatina, *Adagio molto espressivo*—

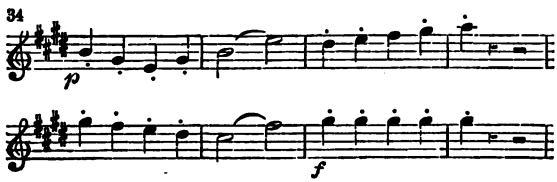


is, however, the emotional climax of the work, and is one of the supreme things in all music, full of the most noble expressiveness and an almost unearthly serenity which the short minor interlude, with the deeply touching broken accents of the first violin, only serves to intensify. The finale as we now have it is an afterthought, and is its composer's last completed work: it is a very bright and spirited movement, making great use of a humorous octave figure, and is structurally deeply interesting, though perhaps its light-heartedness is a slight shock after the wonderful closing bars of the Cavatina. The original finale [1] was pub-

[1] Which, by-the-bye, was itself a second thought, the first sketches being concerned with entirely different material.

lished separately as Op. 133: it is an enormously long fugue (or rather compound of fugue and variations) that is, it must be confessed, an exceedingly hard nut for even the most devoted Beethoven-lover to crack, and is indeed never played at all, having been frankly abandoned as practically unintelligible by any one.

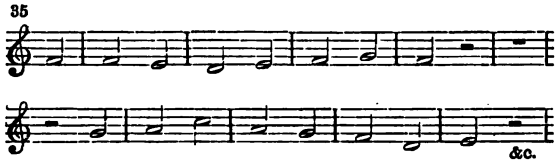
Though it never approaches the uncouth inconsequence of the "Grosse Fuge," the C sharp minor quartet, Op. 131, is certainly in several respects a very hard work to understand even now, and Wagner's famous pages in his "Beethoven," with their totally incoherent rhapsodies and ravings, do less than nothing to help: the most difficult portion of all is the opening *Adagio*, a lengthy fugue on very unusual lines and unrelievedly sombre throughout. It leads without pause (strictly, there should be no break at all in the performance of the whole work) by a very striking touch into an *Allegro molto vivace* in the strangely distant key of D major: then follows a short recitative-like section leading to an elaborate set of variations in A major that form what corresponds to the slow movement. Next comes a *Presto* Scherzo full of the quaintest and finest third-period humour—



then a deeply expressive short *Adagio* in G sharp minor, that passes into the *Allegro* finale—a splendid movement full of mighty energy and passion, with passing glimpses of wistful tenderness. Perhaps no musical work is of a more elusive character than this quartet: it is impossible to avoid recognising its enormous greatness and also its homogeneity, but the outlines of many of its pages seem to shift and fade the more closely we regard them, and perhaps it is here, more than anywhere else, that we feel somehow that the composer's thoughts are too large for their medium. But a discussion of the whole of this deeply interesting question must, as has been said, be deferred to a later chapter.

The A minor quartet (Op. 132) is in five full movements, and again exhibits many varieties of mood: the great opening movement, in its swift alternations of light and shade, is indeed much akin to that of the B flat quartet, though the general tone is

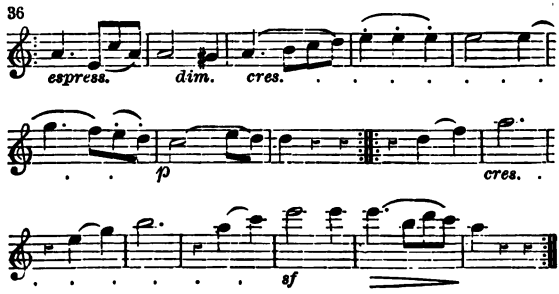
more passionate and sombre. The *Allegro ma non tanto* in A major, in "Scherzo and Trio" form, is a gracefully placid movement with singularly closely knit texture, literally every bar of the main section being directly derived from one of three small figures, and frequently from two or even all of them at the same time. It is followed by one of the most mysterious and elusive movements in existence, a *Molto adagio* in the Lydian mode,[1] based on a strangely solemn and, so to speak, mystical melody—



the variations of which alternate with an *Andante* in D major of more forcible and direct character—the whole section (which, emotional in a way though it is, is in essence more akin to the disembodied music

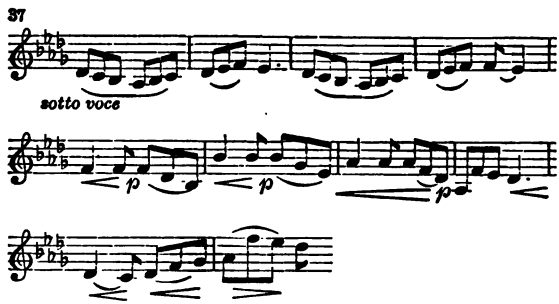
[1] *i.e.* F major with a B natural; this movement is the only classical example (since the sixteenth century) of the pure and steady use of an old ecclesiastical tonality, Bach's so-called "Dorian mode" fugue for organ being practically in D minor.

of Palestrina than to anything else) being entitled "A convalescent's sacred song of thanksgiving to the divinity," in allusion to its composer's recent illness. After this there comes a brief vigorous *Alla marcia, assai vivace* in A major, leading by a recitative-like transition to the minor finale, a passionate complex movement of which the chief subject is a grandly sweeping, sombre tune—



one of the greatest inspirations of the third period—that was originally intended for the finale of the Choral Symphony.

The F major quartet (Op. 135) is built, generally speaking, on an altogether smaller scale: apart from the magnificent *Lento* variations—



one of Beethoven's loveliest and most deeply-felt movements—and the strange half-dramatic *Grave* section in the finale, the whole work is cast in the lighter mood. Both first movement and finale are in the main nonchalantly cheerful, though with shifting lights and shades and a general undercurrent of something deeper: and the *Vivace* Scherzo is perhaps the most freakish outburst in all Beethoven's works, full of a curiously fascinating irresponsible sort of humour that reaches its climax where the three lower strings play exactly the same five notes for fifty bars on end, while the first violin leaps with frantic boisterousness up and down a range of three octaves.

CHAPTER VII

CHAMBER-MUSIC FOR PIANOFORTE AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

THOUGH the ten sonatas for pianoforte and violin do not include any real specimen of Beethoven's latest style (the Op. 96 sonata is a little too early to be so entitled), nevertheless they form a very nearly complete epitome of his different types of movement, and comprise specimens of nearly all his moods. The three sonatas grouped as Op. 12 are not indeed specially fine examples of the first period, but they contain very great beauties, and are far too much neglected by the average concert-violinist. No. 1 in D, with its delightfully decorative variations and its gay finale, and No. 2 in A, where the delicate and beautifully polished finale is the most striking section, are throughout (in spite of a little passing shadow in the middle movement of the latter) light-hearted and cheerful in tone: the *Adagio* of the sonata in E flat touches,

however, deeper feelings, though still not so deep as in some earlier pianoforte sonatas, and the other two movements are throughout breezy and buoyant in style, the opening *Allegro* being indeed one of the most brilliantly written, as regards pianoforte technique, in all Beethoven's chamber-music works. The sonatas in A minor (Op. 23) and F major (Op. 24) were written only a year or two after these three, and also belong to the first-period style: the former is rather the severer and less immediately fascinating of the two, but perhaps on closer acquaintance the appeal that it makes is a little deeper than that of the F major, beautifully graceful and happy from start to finish though the latter is. All these five form, indeed, in their different ways, a typical first-period group: and it is a great pity that the ordinary concert-goer has so few opportunities of hearing them performed by first-rate players.

Nevertheless it is true that in the three sonatas, Op. 30, we advance into a larger world. The first of these, in A major, is a work of exceptional charm, instinct with limpid purity of style and the greatest delicacy alike in idea and treatment, the *Adagio*

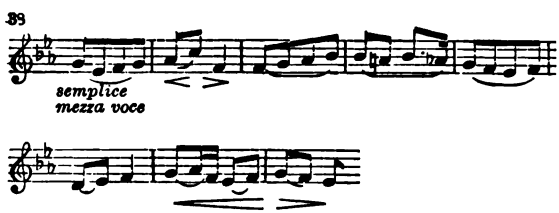
being especially beautiful: the sonata originally ended with what is now the finale of the "Kreutzer," the present variations (which match far better with the rest of the work) being a happy afterthought, due, as we shall shortly see, to a mere accident. The second sonata, the famous C minor, has very unjustly quite overshadowed its more retiring companion: but there can be no doubt that it is a larger and deeper work, and indeed one of the great masterpieces. The first and last movements, with their wonderfully strong, sombre energy and passion, strike a note hitherto unheard in Beethoven's music; and the two in the middle, if not of so totally new a type, are singularly fine specimens of their different moods. It dates from 1802, and may fitly rank with the equally great pianoforte solo sonata in D minor written at the same time as the first-fruits of the real deep Beethoven, seen only partially before. By the side of the A major and C minor the third sonata, in G major, is relatively unimportant: the lengthy *Tempo di Menuetto* is indeed, for Beethoven, somewhat dull, and the first and last movements, though vigorous and breezy, and with many points of interest,

never quite prevent our feeling that the whole sonata is somewhat of an intruder into a group the two other members of which are so vastly superior.

The sonata (Op. 47), dedicated to Rudolph Kreutzer, is a work with a reputation that is, on the whole, considerably less high among musicians than among the general public. It was written "in a specially brilliant style" (as the original title-page states) on commission from a mulatto violinist named Bridgetower; Beethoven, as was often the case, was dilatory, and consequently the finale which had originally been intended to form part of Op. 30, No. 1, was at the last moment borrowed for the newer sonata, to which it afterwards adhered, a new finale being, as we have seen, written for the other. The sonata is certainly the most virtuoso-like piece of chamber-music in all Beethoven's works; and the appeal that it makes is, in a certain sense, so direct as to hamper the full expression of the more subtle qualities. It would, of course, be the height of absurdity to deny the many fine features of the work, and especially of what is by far its finest portion, the massively bold and vigorous opening *Presto:* but never-

theless the fact remains that it is not one of those to which we naturally turn when thinking of typical specimens of its composer's genius.

The last sonata, in G major (Op. 96), which, apart from some quite negligible early little variations, &c., is the only other work for pianoforte and violin, is, however, of quite a different type, and is one of the very great works, greater in some respects than the C minor. In many ways the general mood is curiously akin to that of the Op. 30, No. 1 sonata: there is the same delicacy of touch and limpidness of style, the same absence of gloom or striving. But the G major sonata has all the added depth that the ten years' interval has given: and in the *Adagio*—



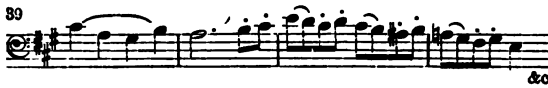
which is throughout on Beethoven's very loftiest level of inspiration, the calm happiness rises to a pitch of sublime serenity

that makes the movement one of the outstanding things in all music.

The works for pianoforte and violoncello, though few in number, include typical specimens of all the composer's periods. The first is represented by three sets of variations—one, quite unimportant, on a theme from Handel's "Judas Maccabæus," and two on themes from Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte," of which the earlier (on "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen") is the more interesting, and contains, though it is practically never heard, some really characteristic music — and two sonatas, grouped together as Op. 5 and published in 1797. Both of these are designed on a plan to which there is no parallel in all the rest of Beethoven's works; it consists of two quick movements, the first in binary and the second in rondo form, with the addition at the outset of a slow introduction of unusual length. Probably the reason for the subsequent abandonment of this structural scheme was a feeling that it was deficient in balance and contrast: but there are other first-period works besides these which seem to show that Beethoven was not yet quite certain of his ground. Indeed the F major sonata shows, in its

first movement especially, a sort of youthful ambitiousness in design (the C major pianoforte sonata, Op. 2, No. 3, is a similar case) which seems to be trying to produce something brilliant and unusual without any very decided conception with which to build a foundation: and the result is certainly rather superficial and lacking in coherence. In spite of many beauties of passing ideas and general detail, this sonata is, on the whole, one of the least interesting of Beethoven's larger works: the second sonata, in G minor, is considerably finer and more closely knit and convincing in structure. The work cannot indeed be classed with the greatest masterpieces of the early style, but its impressive introduction, its fiery *Allegro molto più tosto presto*, and its sparkling Rondo, form a very delightful whole, that is unquestionably the finest piece of violoncello music since Bach's suites, and not indeed inferior to these. But the A major sonata (Op. 69) that followed after an interval of twelve years, strikes a very different note: here we see the mature Beethoven of the second period, of which it is indeed one of the most beautiful examples. The general prevailing mood is one of bright dignity, though the very remarkable Scherzo

in A minor adds a touch of grimness in which, however, an element of something lighter is never altogether absent: throughout the whole the level of inspiration is very high, and the polish of the workmanship supreme—special moments that are always eagerly looked for are the coda of the first movement and the astonishingly impressive return to the exquisite chief subject of the finale—



The short *Adagio* in E major that leads into the finale is structurally interesting: it can hardly be considered strictly as an "Introduction" as its tonic is different, and yet it is not at all of the nature of an entirely separate movement. It is only eighteen bars long, and though all but the last five of these are in E major, the gradual harmonic overbalancing, so to speak, in the direction of the key of the finale is so perfectly managed that the whole sounds quite natural and inevitable. It is, however, the only example of such a structure in the works of Beethoven or indeed any great classic.

The two last sonatas (Op. 102), which date from 1815, are as different in style from this as this is from the two of Op. 5: the appeal they make is not so direct as that of the A major sonata, but to many musicians they seem quite equally great—some would perhaps say greater. The first, in C major, was originally inscribed "Freie Sonate," and its structure, though flawlessly organic, is of uncommon type: its tone alternates between deep brooding tenderness of that special kind that is unknown before the third period and humour that ranges in fitful light and shade over the whole range from sheer fun to volcanic brusqueness. In pure beauty of sound the A major sonata is no doubt superior to either of those of Op. 102; but the C major sonata has a strangely haunting attractiveness, and the richly sombre and massive *Adagio* of that in D strikes what is perhaps the deepest note in all the violoncello works. The opening *Allegro* of this sonata, strong and passionate in general mood, is also extremely fine: but the fugal finale is something of an enigma. Some musicians rate it very high, and anyhow no excessive stress need be laid on its undeniable roughness of effect: and yet to most of even the

steadiest lovers of Beethoven the movement seems something of a relative failure. But a consideration of Beethoven's third-period fugues, of which this is one of the most typical examples, may be more fitly deferred till a later chapter.

The remaining works for pianoforte with a single other instrument are practically negligible: the variations for pianoforte and flute and the sonata for pianoforte and mandoline are indeed entirely so, and the sonata for pianoforte and horn, though containing a short slow movement which has some noteworthy features, is as a whole of but slight interest.

The trios for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello include, on the other hand, a great deal of Beethoven's finest music. The three early works, in E flat, G major, and C minor (Op. 1) have been too much neglected by concert-givers: they are all very delightful specimens of the composer's first style which is seen in them in quite mature form, though they do not indeed contain any examples of its deepest features. The gay finale of the E flat trio (with its gracefully humorous developments of the skip of a tenth in the leading theme) and the expressive slow movement of that in G major are perhaps

the most directly striking portions of the first two : the C minor trio is more frequently played, and is on the whole no doubt the finest, though the brilliancy of the pianoforte writing may possibly be a reason (though a poor one) why it has not been neglected quite so much as its companions. The variations are a very melodious example of the early decorative type, and the *Menuetto*—a transition between the Mozartian slow type and the Haydnesque " quasi Scherzo "—is in many ways highly remarkable : in the " trio " of the minuet we may notice the *glissando* writing for the pianoforte, though the passage is now usually played with two hands—a course far safer on the modern instrument, where the much deeper key-fall makes rhythmical and comparatively slow glissandos very difficult.

The trio in B flat (Op. 11) with clarinet (or violin) and violoncello is, in sharp contrast to these beautiful works, a production of little or no interest : the finale—a set of mechanical variations on a poor tune from Weigl's opera, " L'amor marinaro "—is occasionally heard as a " playing-in piece " at the quaint entertainments known as " Grand Ballad Concerts," to the frequenters of which it (along with the variations from

the "Kreutzer" sonata) represents the genius of Beethoven. Both the two trios (Op. 70) are, however, in their very different ways, among their composer's very greatest works. The first, in D major, has only three movements, there being no Scherzo or any corresponding feature: the only other instances of this structure in all Beethoven's works (for more than two instruments, that is to say) are to be found in the little Op. 11 trio just mentioned, and in the quintet for pianoforte and wind, and the whole of subsequent classical music shows no exact parallel.[1] Here, however, it is not hard to see that the inclusion of an extra movement would altogether spoil the organic balance of the whole, so large is the scale on which all the three are built, and so uncompromisingly sharp the contrast of the mood of the central *Largo* with that of the first and last quick sections. And indeed, superb as are both of these down to every detail, it is of the *Largo* that we primarily think when the trio is mentioned; and the title of the "Spirits-trio," by which some romantically minded Germans describe the

[1] Brahms' F major string quintet is not strictly an example, as the middle movement is a mixture of alternating slow and quick sections.

whole work, refers to nothing else.[1] It is one of Beethoven's longest slow movements (not in bars, but in the time it takes), and is throughout unrelievedly sombre in tone, with a weirdly impressive sort of mysteriousness brooding over it that makes it quite unlike any other movement in Beethoven's works, or indeed in those of any one else. In the companion trio in E flat, however, we have sunshine from first to last: in place of the long gloomy *Largo* there are two movements of moderate (*allegretto*) speed —one in place of the regular slow movement, the other in place of the regular Scherzo. The former consists of some gracefully nonchalant pages, alternating between C major and C minor, and finally ending in the latter key (strictly speaking the "wrong" one) with a little outburst of brusque humour of which there have been several forecasts earlier in the movement: the whole of this *Allegretto* is of a type not at all common in

[1] It seems likely that the main theme of the *Largo*—

No. 40.

had originally some connection with a Witches' Chorus in projected incidental music to "Macbeth."

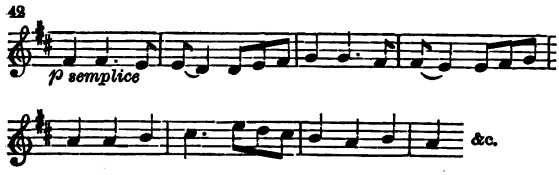
Beethoven's works—*mutatis mutandis*, the *Allegretto scherzando* of the eighth symphony and the *Andante con moto ma non troppo* of the B flat string quartet (Op. 130) are partial parallels. The *Allegretto ma non troppo* is the only example (earlier than the third-period works) of the sort of Intermezzo-movement to which Brahms was so partial: it is a singularly tender and delicate strain, and the middle section contains harmonic designs which, long before Schubert had arrived at maturity, show some of the most characteristic features that we naturally associate with the younger composer's name. This trio is as a whole, especially in the rapid buoyant flow of its opening and closing movements, the most brilliant of all Beethoven has left us: but the brilliancy is always strictly subordinate to the organic development of the material, and all the scales and arpeggios are turned to things of perfect beauty which have, as much as anything else, their allotted place in the entire design.

Apart from a few small productions—one or two boyish things, an easy single-movement trio of 1812 written for some friends, and a set or two of variations, among which the late set on "Ich bin der Schneider

Kakadu" is of very considerable though not outstanding interest—Beethoven's only remaining work for this combination is the colossal trio in B flat, Op. 97, one of the goodly company of masterpieces dedicated to Beethoven's firm friend, the Archduke Rudolph. The predominant note of the opening *Allegro moderato* is its massive and spacious dignity: often, as in the noble chief theme itself—

and the wonderful long-drawn passage that leads back to the recapitulation, the harmonies move with unusual slowness and deliberation, and the coda is one of the greatest examples in Beethoven's works of his unique power of producing an enormously broad effect with the simplest and barest material. The Scherzo that follows (necessarily placed second in the scheme because the *Andante* leads without break into the last movement) is one of its composer's largest and greatest specimens: its general tone is one of strong and buoyant humour, at times (as in the strange creeping subject of the central section) a little grim, and

throughout firmly in hand, not "unbuttoned" as Beethoven himself described the mood of some other works. The slow movement is a set of variations on a theme that has probably always been recognised as one of Beethoven's most solemnly beautiful melodies—



The first four variations are of what may be called the composer's later decorative type, full of exquisite grace and tenderness, but more similar in style and closer to the theme than is the case with some of the other later sets. The fifth variation returns to the theme with new simple and speaking harmonies; but it never finishes, and passes with a kind of faltering awe into a coda of an unearthly purity hardly matched elsewhere even by Beethoven.

So far there have never been two opinions about the supreme greatness of the trio: but diverse views have been entertained about the Rondo finale which, as has been said,

follows the *Andante* without any break. It is a bright, brilliant movement, consistently gay in tone, and very interesting in several unusual structural features, such as (among others rather more recondite) the feint of beginning in the sub-dominant key, and the long coda in different rhythm, with its defiant plunge into the out-of-the-way key of A major. Many musicians, arguing very justly that an organic work of art need not necessarily be finest in any one special portion, urge that the lightness of the movement is not at all incongruous with all the rest, but only the due balancing element in the perfection of the whole: many others, however (and probably the larger number), always feel somehow an uncomfortably annoying shock when the dream of the *Andante* is dispersed with an indifference that is almost brutal, and never, in spite of their appreciation of all the many fine things in the movement, become quite reconciled to it in these surroundings.

The only other composition for pianoforte and other instruments (apart from three boyish quartets) is the quintet in E flat (Op. 16) for pianoforte, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon—arranged afterwards by

Beethoven himself as a quartet for pianoforte and strings: this, in spite of many and varied beauties, is one of the less characteristic works of the first period, but is specially interesting as an obvious challenge to Mozart on his own ground. It is easy to see that it deliberately follows the general plan of Mozart's lovely work in the same key for the same combination of instruments; and it is equally easy to see that the youthfully ambitious Beethoven, while trying to produce a work of a grander kind than Mozart's, really fails (probably largely owing to the hampering results of this rivalry) to write music either formally or materially equal to his model. To some extent, though in a still more marked form, it is the same problem that met us when considering the septet: and we are so accustomed (utterly wrongly indeed) to look upon Mozart as more or less superseded by Beethoven that a clear instance of the opposite state of things is of special value.

CHAPTER VIII

PIANOFORTE SONATAS

APART from some very juvenile works, and a couple of sonatinas of doubtful authenticity and anyhow of no value, Beethoven's pianoforte sonatas are thirty-two in number, ranging from 1795 or earlier to 1822: they embrace examples of every mood, many of them are among his very greatest works, and the whole volume will always be that with which the pianist would, out of all his library, be most loth to part. The first three sonatas—in F minor, A major, and C major, Op. 2—are of varying character: the first (the *Adagio* of which seems to be taken from one of the boyish pianoforte quartets) is a pleasant work, showing but little individuality, least of all in its finale, but the A major is a very fine, terse, and characteristic sonata, full of point and beauty, with a *Largo appassionato* that is perhaps the earliest example of a slow movement charged with really deep, earnest feel-

ing. The C major is externally much more ambitious and is technically very brilliant, but, apart from the highly polished and piquant Scherzo, and things here and there in the other movements, is by no means among the most interesting: there is a certain amount of mere display in it,[1] and the first movement contains a good deal of sheer "padding" and is structurally something like a showy failure. Op. 7, in E flat, is, however, far finer—finer indeed perhaps in some ways than the A major: the slow movement is full of noble expressiveness and calm dignity, and the other movements (specially perhaps the third and fourth) show a grace and spirit that mark the real individual Beethoven. Op. 10 includes three sonatas, two in C minor and F major —very pleasant but comparatively slight and unimportant—and one in D major, that is the earliest outstanding masterpiece among the sonatas, and one of the greatest first-period works, if not indeed (supposing competitive comparisons were forced upon us) the greatest of them all. Here the individuality of style is absolute and un-

[1] Perhaps this may be the lamentable reason why the sonata is more often played in public than any others of the early works.

challenged, the structure of all the movements is mature and flawless, the ingenuity of the treatment of the delightful three-note phrase in the finale is astonishing, and the material is of wonderful beauty and character: but the crown of all is the *Largo e mesto*, one of its composer's grandest slow movements, and full of supreme passion and tenderness, which are only insulted by the addition of unauthorised and entirely unnecessary "meanings."

It is very difficult to know why Beethoven should have called the sonata in C minor, Op. 13, "Sonate Pathétique": it is one of the very few instances of authentic titles, but it is hard to see in it any special appropriateness of any kind. Though not as a whole at all equal to Op. 10, No. 3, it is vastly superior to Op. 10, Nos. 1 and 2: the first movement, with its impressive *Grave* introduction and its fiery *Allegro molto e con brio*, is specially fine, and the other two, though of a less advanced type, are full of beauties. The two sonatas in E major and G major, Op. 14, are of a slighter kind: neither is of special importance, though there are many points of interest, especially in the graceful G major sonata, the finale of which is entitled "Scherzo"—the only

other examples in Beethoven's works of this use of the term for a movement not in "Scherzo and trio" form being in the pianoforte sonata, Op. 31, No. 3, and in the string quartet in C minor. The next sonata, in B flat, Op. 22, is, however, the finest since Op. 10, No. 3: it does not show the same boldness or the same emotional depth, and in some structural respects is less advanced,[1] but it is full of characteristic vigour and characteristic delicacy, and, especially in the very fine *Adagio*, the material is of remarkably individual quality.

When so large a number of works are concerned, it would be absurd to expect signs of continual growth from one to the next: and anyhow the progress of all composers is something that can only be judged by taking broad and spacious views and not troubling overmuch about minute chronology. So we should not be surprised to find the next sonata, in A flat, Op. 26, on the whole, not equal to Op. 22: abandoning the ordinary methods of sonata-structure, Beethoven here introduces two slow move-

[1] The entire absence of any sort of coda in the first movement is highly "old-fashioned" and very unusual even in much earlier works of Beethoven—though the same is, oddly enough, the case in Op. 2, No. 2.

ments, one (which opens the sonata) a set of variations, and the other a "funeral march on the death of a hero," which is said to owe its existence to a fit of pique at the compliments paid to a funeral march in Paer's "Achille," a popular contemporary opera. The variations, beautiful as in many respects they are, certainly look backwards rather than forwards, and the Scherzo (standing second in the scheme) and the finale are not, in spite of all their features of interest, markedly individual; and even the march itself, with all its fine manly impressiveness and massive dignity, is hardly Beethoven at his greatest. The two sonatas, Op. 27, also written in the same year 1801, show him in more consistent mood: they are both styled "sonata quasi una fantasia," not as meaning anything remotely like formlessness, but merely as indicating that they do not follow the ordinary disposition of movements, and that they are to be played straight through without pause—according to the careful direction at the end of each movement in the E flat sonata, which, though only to be found at the end of the first movement in the C sharp minor sonata, is probably implied at the end of the second also. The E flat sonata, the first of

the two, has always been rather overshadowed by its more famous companion, but it is throughout a strikingly beautiful work, full of light and shade, and showing in every page the individuality of its composer: its structure is unusual, consisting of an *Andante* in sectional ternary ("Scherzo and trio") form with an *Allegro* middle section, followed by an *Allegro molto vivace* in C minor (with some striking syncopated octaves, one hand legato and the other staccato)—a Scherzo in ordinary form, though not so entitled—and a short *Adagio con espressione* in A flat major, leading to an extended *Allegro vivace* finale, towards the end of which the *Adagio* reappears in modified form. Unprecedented though this design is, it is perfectly coherent and effective, but Beethoven never attempted it again: and so this beautiful work remains the only classical example of an interesting structural experiment. The companion sonata in C sharp minor is even finer, and has always, from the very first, been one of its composer's best known and best loved works: the ridiculous "Moonlight" nickname is due originally to some romantic nonsense by the poet Rellstab, and should be sternly abandoned to the nursery, along

with the astonishing fictions to which it has given rise. But not even this absurd title can dim the greatness of this most deeply imaginative work, which is one of the masterpieces among the sonatas: alike in the wonderful dreamy opening *Adagio sostenuto*,[1] in the delicate little *Allegretto*, and in the final restlessly passionate *Presto agitato*, both form and matter show the "grand style" in the true sense of the words.

The sonata in D major, Op. 28, that also dates from 1801, was endowed by the Hamburg publisher Cranz with the name of "Pastoral Sonata"—an inoffensive but not specially elucidatory title: throughout it is cheerfully happy, full of a bright vigour that nevertheless does not exclude softer and more reflective moods. The *Andante* seems to have been a special favourite with its composer: but probably most musicians now are inclined to rank it hardly so high as the first movement or the brilliantly terse and original Scherzo. The group of sonatas known as Op. 31 consists, like the

[1] The direction "senza sordini" is interesting: it, of course, is used in the strict etymological sense as meaning "without the dampers," *i.e.* "with the sustaining pedal"—but, nevertheless, the title-page of the work says "for clavecin or pianoforte," and on the former instrument the desired effect is impossible.

group Op. 10, of one splendid masterpiece with two rather less fine satellites: but the discrepancies are not altogether so wide as in the earlier collection. The first of the set, in G major, is emotionally quite unclouded and, so to speak, thoroughly comfortable: both the first and the last movements run their pleasant courses in very gracefully light-hearted fashion, and the central *Adagio grazioso* is a curious surrender to the Hummelian ideal—an elegant collection of shakes and *fiorituri* with very little depth of any sort, though a few bars here and there show traces of the real Beethoven. But with the D minor sonata we reach one of his most splendid masterpieces, and one which is extraordinarily homogeneous throughout. The nobly expressive *Adagio* and the restlessly wistful *Allegretto* finale (with its exquisitely delicate play of light and shade) are unsurpassable examples of their styles: and the opening movement, with its passionate sadness and its wonderful speaking recitatives, is one of Beethoven's grandest conceptions. The third sonata, in E flat, fills up the gap between Nos. 1 and 2: like the former, it is throughout emotionally unclouded and more or less light in tone, but there is no looking back to old methods,

and the whole work is thoroughly individual, though not among the great masterpieces. In it we find both a Scherzo and a Minuet, the former being in $\frac{2}{4}$ time—a rhythm common in later Scherzos, but exceptional with Beethoven: the strongly marked rhythm of the finale is persistent to a degree that is also exceptional, save indeed in movements where the melodic contour of a phrase is also preserved,[1] as is not the case here.

We next reach two little and quite unimportant sonatas in G minor and G major, published as Op. 49 in 1802, but no doubt written considerably earlier: the finale of the G major is based on the tune also used for the Minuet of the septet, and there is evidence that the sonata version is the original. Op. 53, in C major, written in 1804, is the famous work dedicated to Count Waldstein—an undeniable masterpiece, yet one that is, on the whole, more worshipped by pianists than by other musicians, and that shows a strong element of virtuosity very rare in the sonatas: originally the movement now known separately as the "Andante in F" formed part

[1] *e.g.* the first movement of the C minor symphony, or the Scherzo of the Choral.

of the work, but it was discarded in favour of the present short *Adagio* that leads directly into the finale. Apart from this *Adagio*, which is one of the most deeply romantic and impressive pages in all Beethoven's works, the sonata is built on what might be called massively brilliant lines. The technical display is flawlessly organised, and the whole structure is balanced to perfection: but nevertheless many musicians cannot somehow avoid the sensation of a rather hard external glitter, which just prevents them from ranking the work, in spite of the *Adagio* and the crowds of beauties elsewhere, side by side with its composer's greatest inspirations.[1]

Op. 54, in F major, is a short two-movement work, not specially attractive at a merely passing glimpse, but improving enormously on closer acquaintance: nevertheless, in spite of all its great merits, it will probably always be rather overlooked between the "Waldstein" on one side and the "Appassionata" on the other. This latter

[1] The octave-passages in the *prestissimo* coda to the finale are hardly possible to play exactly as written, owing to the much deeper key-fall of the modern pianoforte: some pianists play them *staccato*, some attempt a *glissando*, and there is a more or less recognised way of shirking the whole difficulty by a slight rearrangement of the notes.

sonata, in F minor, Op. 57, owes to another inventive effort of the publisher Cranz its well-known title which, though more appropriate than the "Pastoral Sonata," is equally unauthorised: it is one of the grandest of all Beethoven's works, and from the first note to the last the composer's strong sombre grip never relaxes.[1] The opening movement, with its dark passionate tone and its intense nervous force, is one of the most unforgettable things in all music, and the variations and the finale preserve to the end the same lofty spirit: none of Beethoven's works is more emotionally unified than this, and none is more powerful in conception.

A gap of five years elapsed between this sonata and the one in F sharp major, Op. 78, a work small in dimensions but large in style, and a very special favourite with its composer, who was accustomed to emphasise its merits to the great disparagement of the more popular C sharp minor sonata—an unnecessary comparison in which we

[1] The demisemiquaver variation in the slow movement requires extremely discreet and serious playing to make it sound homogeneous: but there is no sort of room for doubt that it is really flawlessly in place—though, as too often played, it sounds mere irrelevant finger-exercises.

need not follow him: its tone is quietly bright and cheerful throughout, and instinct with refinement and delicacy. By the side of this delightful and exquisitely polished work, the sonatina in G major, Op. 79, is altogether unimportant: the sketches make it clear that it was written in 1809, or it would be natural to ascribe it to a considerably earlier date. The next sonata, Op. 81, in E flat, was, though published later, written before Op. 78: it was entitled, byBeethoven himself, "Les adieux, l'absence, et le retour," and was written as a tribute of personal affection on the occasion of a journey of the composer's intimate friend the Archduke Rudolph. It is one of the finest of all examples of so-called "programme-music," and is full (in the first two movements, perhaps, especially so) of all sorts of beauties: most remarkable of all is the marvellous development in the first movement of the three-note phrase — specially indicated in the music as "Lebewohl" — which we hear as the first notes of the short introductory *Adagio*. Each of the three main sections of the work is headed by one of the portions of its complete title, but obviously the suggestions are merely vague and im-

aginative: and though we can perhaps to some extent formulate the poetic conception of the work more closely, yet the beautiful music would remain quite as understandable even if the Archduke had never had to leave Vienna as the French army advanced.

There is a considerable chronological interval before the next sonata, Op. 90, in E minor (1814)—a work containing only two movements, but yielding to none of the sonatas in exquisite charm of style and beauty of sound: its wistful tenderness and romantic feeling gave rise to an odd story that is one of the *loci classici* as regards Beethoven's ideas about meanings in instrumental music.[1] With the sonata in A major, Op. 101, we reach the great group of five which are as typical of the earlier third-period style as the five last quartets are of the later—the sonatas ranging from 1816 to 1822 and the quartets from 1824 to 1826: all of these five sonatas are among their composer's grandest, and they raise all sorts of deeply interesting problems most of which must be left over till we come to deal with the features of the third-period style as a whole. The A major begins with a most

[1] The whole question will be discussed in a later chapter.

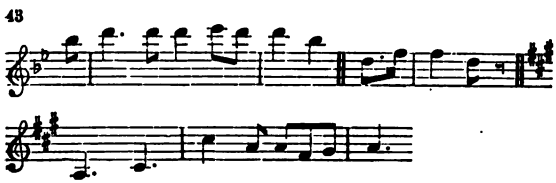
lovely and tender movement that, short though it is, is in the full ordinary binary form in exceedingly compressed shape: a vigorously original *Alla marcia* succeeds, and then a deeply pathetic and expressive short *Adagio* leads, by a passing reminiscence of the opening movement, to an extended energetic finale in large binary form, with a strict fugue (based on its chief subject) occupying the place of the development-section. The whole design is unique in the works of Beethoven or any other standard composer[1]: but the beauty of the material and the intense individuality of its developments prevent our feeling that there is any thing at all out-of-the-way in the structure.

The sonata in B flat (Op. 106), is a huge work that, though containing only the ordinary number of movements, is about twice as long as the longest of the other sonatas; and an additional reason for its very rare appearance on concert-programmes is to be found in its extreme technical difficulty. All musicians are at any rate agreed with regard to the first three movements—the

[1] Possibly a structure in the original version of Brahms' B major trio is a sort of reminiscence of that of this finale; but it is unquestionably a complete failure, and was discarded entirely in the revised version of the first movement.

enormous majesty and strength of the opening *Allegro*, the concentrated point of the epigrammatic Scherzo, (certainly the finest in all the sonatas) and, above all, the overwhelming emotional depth of the *Adagio sostenuto*, which is one of the supreme things in all music:[1] but with regard to the finale —a fantasia-like introduction followed by a gigantic fugue—opinions still differ widely. Probably most musicians, even of those who love their Beethoven best and know the sonata most intimately, cannot divest themselves of a feeling of regret that after the divine slow movement there should follow these strange pages, with their odd contortions (such as the presentation of the

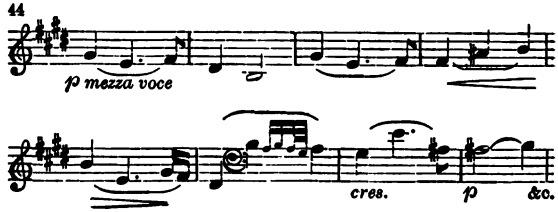
[1] The thematic similarity between the opening notes of each of these three movements—



is in all probability intentional, and, if so, is unique in Beethoven's works: the real melody of the *Adagio* begins at the second bar, and the two introductory notes (which produce the similarity with the other phrases) were indeed only added as an afterthought.

whole long theme tail foremost, which, however, though the most contrapuntally curious of all, sounds the most natural), and their frequent hard scorn of sensuous beauty —apart from the wonderful tranquil interludes. But we may leave to a later chapter a discussion of the whole question of Beethoven's third-period fugues.

The three sonatas, Op. 109, Op. 110, and Op. 111, were all interludes during the completion of the *Missa Solennis*, and with them the great volume comes to a magnificent close: all are unusual in design, and show a singularly rich mellow sort of beauty that is hardly paralleled elsewhere among the pianoforte works. In the exquisite Sonata in E major the fiery restlessness of the central *Prestissimo* only serves to throw into relief the calm happiness of the opening movement and of the final variations, which are based on one of Beethoven's very loveliest tunes—



In the hardly less beautiful Sonata in A flat there are more moods—the tranquil grace of the opening *Moderato*, the vigorous energy of the *Allegro molto*, the solemn pathos of the *Arioso dolente* that both prefaces and interrupts the final calmly dignified fugue. But in some ways, superb as both these works are, the last Sonata in C minor goes still deeper. It is in only two movements —an *Allegro con brio ed appassionato* with a *Maestoso* introduction, and a set of slow variations. In mood it is strangely akin to the so-called "Appassionata": there is the same sombre passion and stern energy in the opening movement, the same colossal breadth and serenity in the variations.[1] But in a sense this work includes all the "Appassionata" and something more besides: and it is not in a whirlwind of strife that the last of Beethoven's sonatas ends, but in a deep and happy content.

[1] And also, it may be noted, the same necessity for strictly "serious" playing of the rapid decorative passages.

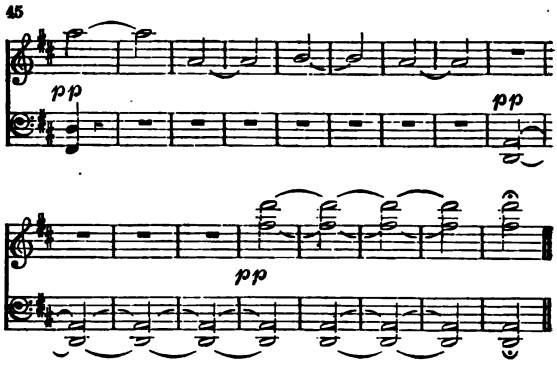
CHAPTER IX

SMALLER WORKS FOR PIANOFORTE

THE term "smaller works" at the heading of this chapter is merely a general phrase for the pianoforte writings other than sonatas: there are indeed among them two or three works on a very large scale, but the great majority are of comparatively slender proportions. More than half of them are variations, of which (not of course counting those that form parts of larger works) Beethoven wrote in all twenty-one sets for pianoforte solo and two for pianoforte duet: the last are, like the one or two other things in the same medium, entirely negligible, and indeed a very considerable number of the other twenty-one are now not worth the attention of any musician who is not concerned with the provision of wholesome practising pieces for the young. Most of them are built on themes from forgotten operas of Paisiello, Grétry, Salieri, Winter, Sussmayer, Righini, Dittersdorf, and

other favourite composers of Beethoven's early days; but our English vanity is flattered by variations (poor ones, it must be confessed, on the whole) on "God save the King" and "Rule Britannia," and a few sets have original subjects. Six sets have outstanding interest, and to these we may confine our attention, leaving till the next chapter a discussion of Beethoven's general views of variation-form.

The earliest of these six is the set of twenty-four variations on Righini's "Venni amore," written for the harpsichord and dating from 1790, when Beethoven was in his twentieth year: this is the earliest of his compositions which is worth more than a merely historical attention, and is indeed in many ways a very remarkable work, which is unaccountably neglected by most critics and pianists. It was its composer's "show piece" when he launched himself as a concert-player on the Viennese world, and is indeed of unusual technical difficulty: but its real interest for us lies in its notable individuality and mastery of style, its great variety and wealth of light and shade, and a few strange forecasts of much later music—most of all the striking end—



which might very well find a place in Schumann's "Papillons," and is really quite unlike any other passage in all Beethoven's works. The twelve variations on a Russian dance by Wranitzky are a little later (1796); they form a very graceful and polished example of mature first-period work, and are one and all most delightful both to play and to hear. Two important sets date from 1802: the earlier of these is a brilliant set of fifteen variations and a fugue on the same theme from Beethoven's own "Prometheus" ballet-music that was afterwards used for the finale of the "Eroica" Symphony, where, as here, the bass of the theme is announced and varied before the appearance of the

actual melody. The six variations (Op. 34) strike, perhaps, a somewhat deeper note: the original theme is very stately and beautiful and the variations, which are strongly contrasted in speed, in rhythm, and (very exceptionally) in key also, are full of tranquil grace of a very satisfying kind, which gives them a high place among the instrumental works of this date. Slightly later are the thirty-two variations in C minor on an original eight-bar theme that is practically a chaconne, though not so entitled: they are not all of equal interest, but many of them, more especially some in the quieter moods, show very clearly that Beethoven was doing the work decided injustice when in later life he expressed his cordial dislike of it altogether.

But all these sink into the background in comparison with the set of thirty-three variations on a waltz of Diabelli, dating from 1823 or thereabouts, and owing their inception to a publication called "Vaterländischer Künstlerverein," consisting of a collection of single variations on this waltz by all the prominent composers of the day: Beethoven was asked to supply one, but instead of doing so he produced this huge work, one of his largest both in scope and

in actual size, which, besides being of almost unique interest as regards technical structure, is one of the great typical third-period compositions. In it we find examples of almost every mood, from the deep brooding mysteriousness of the twentieth variation (one of his greatest pages) to the fantastic delicacy of the tenth or the hammering energy of the twenty-eighth: but indeed the whole long set ranks high among Beethoven's masterpieces.[1]

The other pianoforte pieces include, along with a good deal that is of very little interest, some notably great works in miniature style. There are four Rondos—a slight juvenile effort in A major, one in C major of 1797 that is quite agreeable but not much more, a very graceful example in G major of 1802, and a posthumously published "Rondo a Capriccio" written in Beethoven's latest years—a brilliantly sparkling and polished piece inscribed "Rage over a lost penny," a quaint joke that would no doubt have been expunged had the work been printed in the composer's lifetime. The well-known Andante in F major

[1] The twenty-third is also a sort of variation of the air "Notte e giorno faticar" from Mozart's "Don Giovanni," a kind of double outlook that is quite unique.

that had originally been intended for the "Waldstein" Sonata is a very charming movement, not approaching its supplanter in elevation of style, but nevertheless full of delicate grace and with a singularly beautiful close: and a few years later in date is a curious Fantasia beginning in G minor and ending in B major, a work generally incoherent and inconsequent to a degree altogether exceptional for Beethoven, but containing several features of interest. However, the Bagatelles, of which there are three sets, are the most noteworthy of these smaller pieces, and are the only ones that need further be considered. The seven that form Op. 33 were composed much earlier than the date of publication would seem to indicate: some are merely juvenile, but Nos. 4 and 6 are very delicate and melodious, and No. 7 is a very vigorous and original sort of little piece containing a remarkable "misty" Schumannesque pedal effect. The eleven of Op. 119 date from 1821–2, though Nos. 2–5 had been sketched many years earlier; Beethoven does not seem to have attached much importance to them, but nevertheless they are almost all of much interest. Some indeed, as Nos. 8 and 11, are full of depth and beauty of the purest

and most individual kind—tiny gems of perfect lustre: Nos. 1, 2, and 4 are very dainty and expressive, Nos. 5 and 6 are in very different ways (the latter is much the later in style) equally fanciful and breezy, and No. 7 is a curious, but very far from unattractive, sort of little rhapsody in the composer's latest manner. These slender trifles, interesting as they are, yield, however, to the set of six that form Op. 126, which are of high value and importance and date from 1823; they were perhaps intended to be played in direct succession, but the matter does not seem certain. Nos. 1 and 3, with their wonderfully serene beauty and their depth and intimacy of style, are high among the great things of pianoforte literature—greatness having no necessary connection with size: No. 2 is a wayward little piece of curiously fascinating character, while No. 4—the largest of the set—is a sort of "Bourrée" full of strength and individuality, with an entrancingly quaint major section. Nos. 5 and 6 are, though full of interest, perhaps hardly as fine as the rest, and the boisterous humour of the little *Presto* at the beginning and end of the latter seems to most people distinctly out

of place: but, as a whole, the set is, though on a small scale, one of its composer's masterpieces, and it is a great pity that most recital-pianists seem to be ignorant of its existence.

CHAPTER X

BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC AS A WHOLE

"THE greatest genius," Emerson has said, "is the most indebted man;" and though the aphorism is not one that can be altogether blindly accepted, it emphasises a great truth that is too often forgotten by those who confuse real originality with mere newness. The sources of Beethoven's style are, owing to purely historical circumstances, less complex than the sources of the styles of most later composers: but nevertheless it is absurd to consider him as independent of his great predecessors. His chief and almost his only definite debts were due to Haydn and Mozart, more especially the latter, as Haydn's greatest works date from years when Beethoven was rapidly shaking off his influence: both of them had given him lessons, and indeed their spirit was in the air to the practical exclusion of all others at the time when the younger genius

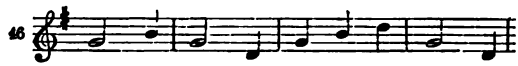
was assimilating his material. All through Beethoven's life, he looked at instrumental music in the light of the general structural principles which Haydn and Mozart had developed, and however much he broadened and bent them, the thread of connection is always there: and, quite apart from form, we see on every page of the early work the influences of their technical methods. Of other composers the traces are much slighter: the influence of Handel and Gluck is practically non-existent, though there are passing glimpses of the models of second-rate people like Hummel in some of the piano variations and in parts of the slow movement of the G major sonata from Op. 31. "Fidelio" owes, however, a good deal to Cherubini, for whose operas Beethoven had an especial admiration, often praising their librettos for their high ethical tone as contrasted with the subjects of most stage works: and the general style of the music is certainly more akin to "Les deux journées" than to any opera of Mozart—of the less important parts of the music, that is to say, as the great portions are quite above Cherubini's head. As regards Bach, Beethoven no doubt knew familiarly all the comparatively small portion of Bach's

music that was available before the days of the Bach-Gesellschaft edition: but the direct influences are very slight. Purely contrapuntal texture was not Beethoven's natural medium of expression: and the few fugues that he did write owe very little to Bach's methods. But nevertheless the extreme closeness of texture and organic subtlety of most of Beethoven's writing, though paralleled to some extent in Haydn and still more in Mozart, is yet more akin in essence to Bach than to either of the later models: and, whether consciously or not, the great works of Beethoven represent in a very definite and important sense a return to Bach in their entire disregard of any considerations of immediate popularity. Bach, from year to year, poured out in the course of his regular duties an enormous mass of masterpieces in apparently quite comfortable acquiescence in the fact that there was no obvious chance of their being ever known beyond the most limited circle:[1] and Beethoven, if not so calmly self-centred, certainly never troubled (in his serious work) to satisfy anybody but

[1] As a matter of fact, Bach's works have only been published in complete form a very few years; the majority were absolutely unknown a century after his death.

himself, and when told that his new quartets did not please, could simply remark " they will please some day "—a sentence that it is rather difficult to imagine on the lips of Haydn or Mozart. Not, of course, that Haydn or Mozart were, as it is the foolish fashion of to-day to imagine, in any sense " superseded " by Beethoven: they were colossal geniuses living, through no fault of their own, under conditions somewhat more artificial than those under which Bach and Beethoven worked. And we should not forget that these conditions, though they produced an enormous mass of mere stilted " Conversations-musik," produced also in the masterpieces of Haydn and Mozart a sort of wonderful, great, happy childlikeness that music has known neither before nor since: the " Creation " and " Don Giovanni " contain something which, after all, Beethoven, with the whole of his immense range, could not carry on.

Of plagiarism in the ordinary sense of the word (as, for example, not infrequently seen in Schumann) there seem to be no traces in Beethoven's works: the often quoted parallel between the opening subject of the " Eroica " Symphony and a theme from Mozart's early operetta " Bastien et Bastienne "—



is of very little importance, and that between the Scherzo of the C minor Symphony and the finale of Mozart's G minor is, though humorously noted by Beethoven himself, only distinguishable by a process of reflection. However, there seems to be evidence that Beethoven drew to some extent on folk-music (apart from the acknowledged cases in the "Rasoumowsky" quartets), not indeed in the same wholesale manner as Haydn,[1] but nevertheless in a way that makes us much regret that he did not himself supply footnotes in all such instances: especially as, in reflecting on the ethics of such unacknowledged borrowings, we cannot help recognising that, after all, folk-music is not in any definite sense a mere "spontaneous growth from the heart of the people," but is the composition of individuals (whether we know their names or—as a general rule—do not) who have really quite as much moral copyright as any one else. The theme of the variations in the Septet—

[1] See Mr. W. H. Hadow's most interesting little book "A Croatian Composer."

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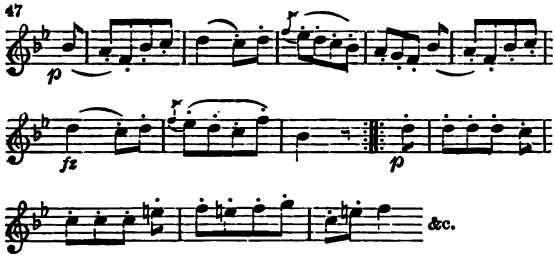

is said by Czerny to be a Rhenish boatmen's song (though the middle portion must surely be much altered, as it is quite "non-popular" in type): that of the Scherzo of the "Eroica" Symphony is ascribed by Marx to a somewhat similar origin; that of the trio of the Scherzo of the A major Symphony is, according to Stadler, an Austrian pilgrims' hymn; the subject of the finale of the same symphony bears a very striking resemblance to the Irish tune "Norah Creina"—

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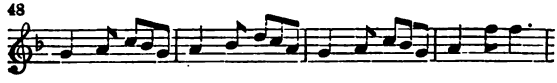


which Beethoven himself arranged in his collection of folk-songs (in the sketch-books, however, the subject is originally far less like the song, and so the similarity may

quite possibly be a mere coincidence); and various melodies in the Pastoral Symphony are close parallels of extant Servian popular tunes, while there are more or less authenticated statements with regard to several other works. Probably further researches may lead to results which, though not in any way so startling as the plagiarisms of Handel,[1] will nevertheless make us alter our vague notions of the meaning of originality: but still we must remember that it is possible in some cases that the folk-tune may be itself borrowed, and not *vice versa* —Schubert's "Lindenbaum," for example, would be unquestionably called a folk-song to-day if its composer's name had been forgotten, as it might easily have been.[2]

The natural division of Beethoven's works into three periods was first pointed out by Fétis and Von Lenz not long after the composer's death, and the nomenclature has

[1] It is impossible to say that Handel was justified by the usage of his time: Bononcini had to retire from England because he was charged with passing off a madrigal of Lotti as his own. The only apparent difference is that Handel was not found out.

[2] Parallels have been drawn between such borrowings from folk-music and the use by North German composers of chorale melodies as ecclesiastical formulæ: but the frank and deliberate universality of the latter custom makes all the difference.

been practically universally adopted as a convenient method of distinguishing his different styles. But nevertheless they run into one another to some extent, and it is impossible to consider them with absolute chronological strictness (the opus-numbers —the mere order of publication—are frequently misleading): roughly speaking, however, we may say that the first period ends at 1802, and the second at 1814. The first style is not altogether so simple a thing as has been sometimes supposed: it includes, in varying degrees, several quite distinct elements—the more or less purely tentative and undeveloped style of, for example, the greater part of the Septet, the ambitious but not quite certain style of, for example, the pianoforte sonata in C major (Op. 2, No. 3) and the first violoncello sonata, and the real individual Beethoven —comparatively small as yet, but quite mature—of works like "Ah, perfido!" the pianoforte sonata in D major (Op. 10, No. 3), the string quintet, and indeed all the outstanding compositions of the time.[1] The number of works of the some-

[1] So far as I know, the first thorough development of these inner divisions of the style is due to Mr. Donald Tovey's writings.

what unbalanced ambitious type is but small, and the great bulk of the less interesting works of the first period belong to the first of these sub-divisions: the influence of Mozart is heavy on them, and in spite of all the beauties scattered all about, the touch is a little constrained (far more so than in Mozart's own masterpieces) and the outlook cautious. We may look, for example, through all the pianoforte variations previous to 1802 (except those on "Venni amore" and the Russian dance) without discovering any sign of future greatness: turn of phrase, harmony, structure—everything is imitative. But still in very many of the works of even this tentative kind we can see glimpses, sometimes many glimpses, of the real individual Beethoven: and in the great examples of the first period we have work which is in every way as mature as the masterpieces of Haydn and Mozart. Indeed, it is altogether misleading to consider the great works of the first period as "superseded" by later developments, just as it would be to consider Palestrina as superseded by Bach: perfect art consists in perfect handling of the material, and the fact that the material of the first period is less rich and varied than that of the later

ones should not blind us to the splendid mastery which its great specimens show. It is only the very youthful and shallow person who thinks that "Le Nozze di Figaro" is any the less a masterpiece because "Götterdämmerung" is written for a larger orchestra and deals with more complex emotions.

Still, when we are dealing with the work of one man, it is, of course, legitimate as well as obvious to say that Beethoven's second period is an advance on the first in the very definite sense that, while nothing whatever is lost, its technical scope is far larger and its emotional range far wider and deeper. A great masterpiece like the pianoforte sonata in D minor—perhaps the earliest complete break with the first style—contains qualities which instrumental music, at any rate, had not known before: and the whole glorious company of second-period masterpieces—the third to the eighth symphonies, the great overtures, the three great concertos, all the amount of great chamber-music from the above-mentioned sonata to the trio Op. 97—will probably always remain as the composer's typical legacy to the vast majority of music-lovers.

In this second period we see Beethoven in absolute serene command over all the possible resources, both technical and emotional, of a rich and deep material: the work is, in Aristotelian phrase, "four-square without blame," the flawless unification of all the possible elements that supreme art can contain. In the third period—the Choral Symphony, the Mass in D, the last five pianoforte sonatas, and the last five string quartets—something has entered which at the same time mars this serene unity and also points the way to still loftier emotional heights, and Beethoven died before he had achieved the perfect reconciliation of conflicting elements. Often the composer seems to be as one "moving about in worlds not realised," an impatience of the necessary limitations of the material is at times visible, and some of the masterpieces of the period are unequal as none of the great works of earlier styles are. While it is true that much is as clear and as final as anything in the second period, yet, even after the lapse of eighty years, there is nothing in music more difficult to comprehend, or more subtle and elusive, than many of the movements of this third style. Fantasy and mysticism have thrown a veil over the sky,

and we grope along knowing little but that our feet are still leading us upwards: ever and again the mists break and we have wider visions than ever before, and sometimes—as in tunes like those of the *Cavatina* of the B flat quartet and the *Lento* of that in F (quoted in an earlier chapter)—a ray of light strikes down from the topmost peaks themselves. In this third period we find side by side grim uncouthness and unearthly serenity, wild passion and noble majesty, inconsequential antics and delicate charm, tortuous involutions and limpid simplicity: the B flat quartet in its original form containing the "Grosse Fuge" is indeed a compendium of them all. True as is Schubert's epitaph about "fair treasures and yet fairer hopes," the words would apply with still deeper intensity to Beethoven's third period, the period of his new birth, with its strange and sometimes painful struggles, and its steady persistent reaching up to a supreme dim ideal: but he died too soon, and then that particular door in music was shut, and not even Brahms found the key.

Like all great creators, Beethoven came not to destroy but to fulfil: in what one might call the legal sense of the words, he

neither abandoned nor invented anything. He has been sometimes credited with the introduction of the scherzo: but though he no doubt was the first to use at all habitually this name to designate the quicker adaptation of the old minuet-movement, yet the thing itself, in every essential point, occurs, at any rate simultaneously if not earlier, in very many works of Haydn, and was indeed an inevitable expansion of the original type—and it can hardly be said that the name is specially illuminating, as there is very little joking, in the ordinary sense of the term, about the majority of classical scherzos.[1] But it is a poor notion of originality that confuses it with mere novelty of external feature: what Beethoven did was to take his material very much as he found it, and gradually to deepen and broaden it, both structurally and emotionally, in ways and to extents of which Haydn and Mozart had never thought. Colossal geniuses as they were, music was with them primarily a thing to please—to please intelligently musical people no doubt (neither ever dreamt of consider-

[1] The middle movement of the pianoforte sonata, Op. 10, No. 2, is called in the sketches "Intermezzo"—a forecast of one of Brahms' most favourite titles.

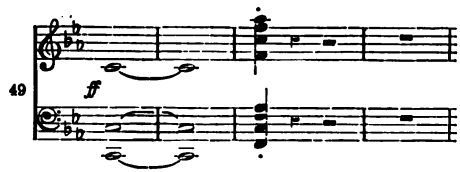
ing anybody else), but still essentially something meant to brighten and to soothe rather than to "give to think," and certainly not *donner furieusement à penser.* But Beethoven's music "gave furiously," not only to think but also to feel, in a manner that the well-bred society of the old régime must have found very strange and uncomfortable; it is to him we owe the absolute emancipation of instrumental music from the trammels of polite artistic society, none the less real because they bore lightly on the greatest of the men who worked under them, and it is his hand that gained for us the full measure of spiritual democracy which is our artistic heritage to-day. In his masterpieces music stands upright and looks the whole scheme of things in the face: it had no doubt done so before with both Palestrina and Bach, but Beethoven's emotional range of vision was incalculably wider than the former's, wider even than the latter's. His great slow movements—which after all are those portions of his works that most of us usually think of primarily when his name is mentioned—are, so to speak, full of all the lights and shades of humanity as no music was before and as extremely little music has been since.

But with all this access of feeling Beethoven preserved throughout his life the sense of the supreme importance of form—not as meaning mere mechanism, but rather that balanced unity of design without which all artistic expression of emotion is but aimless and wasted hysteria. He accepted very much as he found them the various structures polished to such crystalline beauty by the genius of Mozart; and what he did was to broaden them and make them more and more vitalised and flexible till there remained no distinction between form and matter, both being simply the two balancing and inseparable features of the perfect whole. And though this balanced unity is in some ways most palpably noticeable in second-period works, yet it is present undiminished, though in different forms, up to the very end: in the last quartets as in the earliest there is present in varied shape the same intimate sense of the beauty of design as such. And let no one imagine that the secrets of the formal perfection of Beethoven's and all great music can be learnt from text-books: a player could acquire the living rhythm of Joachim by attendance at a course of lectures as easily as a composer could be taught to imitate

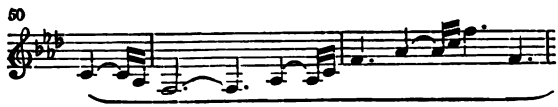
the organic unity of Beethoven's violin concerto by the methods of the examination-room.

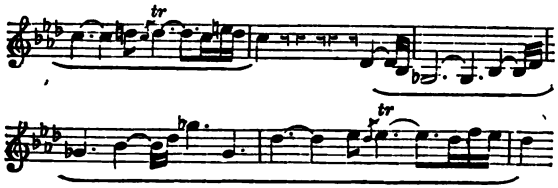
It so happens that most of the large purely instrumental movements of Beethoven are cast in what is ordinarily known as "binary" or "first-movement" form—the "triune symmetry" of exposition, development, and repetition—and it is in such movements that his most noticeable structural achievements are to be found: but nevertheless he dealt with all the various other forms bequeathed by Mozart, and occasionally wrote movements (such as the finale of the "Eroica" Symphony or the *Larghetto* of the violin concerto) which are not reducible to any of the customary structures, while the Choral Fantasia and the Choral Symphony are, considered as entire organisms, innovations of a larger kind, to which in his later years Beethoven planned several parallels which never came to actuality. But in all his great movements, whatever the outlines of the design may be, we see the same features—the same firm holding of all the threads, the same steady organic balance, the same absence of any irrelevant matter: and though we can to some extent dissect the skeletons

of his methods, the living spirit that informs them eludes analysis. The variety is indeed infinite: no two "development-sections" are built on at all identical plans, and the same holds good of the codas—a feature to which Beethoven was indeed the first to give special importance, and which in movements like the opening ones of the third, fifth, seventh, and ninth symphonies or the finales of the seventh and eighth, becomes really a second and crowning development-section in itself. And again Beethoven was the first to recognise the artistic value of an initial impressive surprise, as at the starts of the C minor symphony, the "Coriolan" Overture—

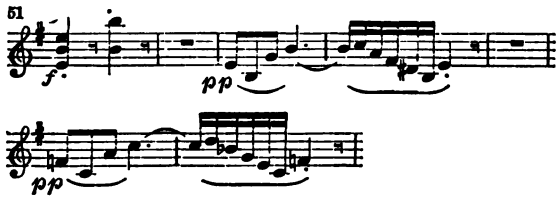


the so-called "Appassionata" Sonata—





the E minor "Rasoumowsky" quartet [1]—



as he was indeed also the first to see how variety could be given to the customary repetitions of the scherzo-form (especially in the extended shape sometimes employed) by mere alteration of nuance alone, as in the Scherzos of the A major Symphony and the "Harp" quartet. But indeed all the great movements seem to have their own distinct and individual designs, however

[1] These last two are obviously identical as regards the main feature—the immediate repetition of a very striking phrase a semitone higher: such a similarity is well-nigh unique in Beethoven's works, though there is no actual resemblance of notes.

much we may group them under various general headings: and it would be necessary to transcribe the music in full for anything remotely like adequate analysis.

Perfect as is, however, the structure of every great movement in Beethoven's works, it is sometimes more difficult to see the necessary homogeneity of complete compositions as wholes: familiarity is possibly liable to breed indiscriminate admiration as well as its proverbial result, and it may very well be that certain vague structural and melodic cross-references that some writers have seen in the seventh and ninth symphonies are merely accidental. Of course it is easy at once to recognise the inevitable organic unity of many of the great works—the so-called "Appassionata" Sonata is a typical instance—but it is quite feasible, if we can shake off the impressions produced by familiarity, to conceive in many other cases of the exchange of movements without any resulting loss. Indeed, it is really impossible, with any compositions made up of separate sections, to ask always for more than a certain amount of homogeneity, in the absence of the often purely mechanical tie of melodic transference: and it is often mere juggling with

our imaginations to say anything specially positive, beyond general considerations of contrasting or complementary moods and of balancing of key-systems. And indeed Beethoven himself does not seem always to have felt at all deeply on the point: while on the one hand there is not in Nottebohm's monumental "Beethoveniana" and "Zweite Beethoveniana" a single example of a movement having been compounded from originally different sources, there are many examples of bodily transference to other works of themes and even of complete movements. The present finale of the "Kreutzer" Sonata originally belonged *in toto* to the sonata, Op. 30, No. 1, and both its present place, and the composition of the new conclusion to the earlier work, are due to the mere accident that Beethoven had been dilatory over his commission, and that no sort of finale to the "Kreutzer" was available on the day of the concert: we can see that the afterthought was certainly an advantage to Op. 30, No. 1, but we should probably not have thought much about the matter had Beethoven left things as they originally were. Similarly the "Grosse Fuge," Op. 133, was written as the original finale of the B flat quartet, Op. 130: the now separate An-

dante in F was the slow movement of the "Waldstein" Sonata, the theme of the *Allegretto* of the A major Symphony was meant for the third "Rasoumowsky" quartet, that of the finale of the A minor quartet for the finale of the Choral Symphony, and so on in many other cases. After all, however much we recognise the unquestionable necessary homogeneity of many works, there is no reason to be more particular than the composer was himself, and indeed, when we reflect on the astounding varieties shown in all the classical works in three- and four-movement form, it is a little difficult to know what, in a work of the same period of the same composer, would really—as between separate sections—constitute inartistic heterogeneity, apart from carelessly alien tonality.

Beethoven's treatment of the variation-form is singularly interesting: it may be briefly described as a gradual advance back to the methods of Bach. Haydn and Mozart had done little for the form, and the latter had indeed regarded it practically solely as an opportunity for graceful melodic decoration of a not particularly solid kind; but Beethoven, to whom the form seems to have made a strong appeal from the first, took

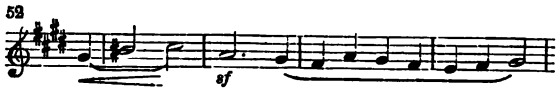
it even at the outset considerably more seriously. Mention has been made in preceding chapters of the numerous independent sets of variations; and in addition to these there are very many other sets (all, with the exception of the finale of the little B flat trio, Op. 11, on original themes) forming part of larger works of all kinds. While many of the earlier sets are practically negligible, yet, as has been said, there are several of the greatest interest, in which we can see the process of transformation from Mozart's usually simply melodic and ornamental method to that originally exemplified in Bach's colossal "Goldberg" variations (founded solely on the bass of the theme), which reaches its climax, in Beethoven's works, in the late pianoforte variations on a waltz of Diabelli. In this final aspect of the variation-form the merely melodic connection is secondary or indeed frequently non-existent: harmony and structure are the chief essential points, and though these may be altered to almost any extent, yet there is always, so to speak, the same intellectual thread running through the whole; and in place of the old rigid and merely decorative ideal, we have an ideal of unity in diversity, of the same subject

presented in continually shifting and new lights. Yet Beethoven does not abandon the artistically permanent elements in the narrower form of Mozart: many of the finest sets (for example, those in the late pianoforte sonatas in E major and C minor) contain variations that are closely melodic and decorative, but all the ornamental filigree-work is flawlessly organic in detail, and there is not a trace of the kind of "musical-box brilliance" to which the form has so often been degraded. Indeed, there is no department of Beethoven's works more interesting and valuable to the student of musical structure than his variations, from the "Venni amore" set for pianoforte—his first really individual composition—to the solemn *Lento* in his last quartet.

Beethoven's secrets of melody and harmony seem beyond all analysis, except in so far as we can point out how very many of his noblest tunes consist almost entirely of consecutive notes, and how the immense strength of the ordinary purely diatonic framework gives a depth that chromatic restlessness, however poignant, can never secure. Of his counterpoint it is possible to say a little more, if we take the word

in the restricted sense of fugal counterpoint: of course, strictly, counterpoint is merely music regarded horizontally as harmony is music regarded vertically, and the two are really inseparable elements. But nevertheless it is possible to say that with some composers so diverse as Palestrina, Bach, or Richard Strauss, the former of these is the primary aspect, while with others, such as Handel, Beethoven, Schubert, or Schumann, the reverse is the case: though, if pressed too far, the distinction becomes meaningless. Of strict fugues Beethoven wrote very few, and all of them belong to his third period, apart from that in the pianoforte variations, Op. 35, those in the Mass in C, and the finale of the third "Rasoumowsky" quartet, which is a brilliant instance of the union of fugal texture and binary form previously exemplified in various ways in the "Zauberflöte" overture and other works of Mozart. The late fugues are nine in number—the two in the *Gloria* and the *Credo* of the Mass in D, that in the "Diabelli" variations, the finale of the violoncello sonata in D, the "Grosse Fuge" originally written for the B flat quartet and the first movement of that in C sharp minor, and the finales of the piano-

forte sonatas, Op. 106 and 110, with the whole central portion of the finale of Op. 101. The first two and the last two of these, at any rate, are universally recognised as great and perfectly organic works, and the "in gloria Dei patris" and "et vitam venturi" fugues in the Mass in D are built on colossal structures of the very finest kind. No doubt the part-writing is less pellucid than that of Mozart, but it is certainly no rougher than the strong work of Bach with its disregard of merely momentary conflicts of passing-notes, and it is full of character and force. The *Adagio* of the C sharp minor quartet—



is much more difficult to grasp, but still at last it yields up the secrets of its sombre beauty, and the fugue in the "Diabelli" variations, though also hard, is quite homogeneous: but at the remaining three some of the most heart-whole adorers of Beethoven's genius feel unwillingly obliged to stop. There are stupendous moments, such as the *una corda* passage, in the enor-

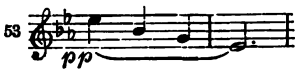
mous finale of Op. 106, and about the whole there is a sort of massive spaciousness: but after all there is really no denying the sheer tortuous ugliness of portions of it, and temperate criticism of its roughnesses need not at all cause us to identify ourselves with the callow young gentlemen who think that they can learn composition without counterpoint.[1] Again, the finale of the violoncello sonata, even after long acquaintance, appears to most musicians somewhat crabbed and hard, and there is no relief at all: while the climax is reached in the outlandish "Grosse Fuge," which (so far as seems to be known) not even Joachim, to whom the popularisation of the late quartets is practically entirely due, has ventured to play in public. The whole problem is indeed very curious, and has no strict parallels in the works of Bach or any other great composer: we cannot make Beethoven's deafness really responsible for much of it, and we can only fall back on the reflection that, after all, the third period is in many ways one of transition—*per aspera* (or, as here, *per asperrima*) *ad astra*.

[1] While, very possibly, themselves perpetrating poetry under the fetters of metre and rhyme, which are quite as much, and as little, "academic."

If we turn to the consideration of Beethoven's scoring, and first of all his scoring in chamber-music, we at once notice the singular variety and richness of sound of his string quartets, in the earliest as in the latest (even if we feel occasionally in the last four that the thoughts are transcending the medium): this seems to be chiefly due to elaborately careful part-writing and also to the economy and restraint which enable him, for effects of contrast, to write two or even three parts in unison or octaves without ever producing mere thinness of sound. In works into which the pianoforte enters there is, *mutatis mutandis*, the same perfect balance: the writing for the pianoforte is in many very interesting respects quite unlike that of the concertos or the solo works, and there is no sort of approach to that *martellato possibile* style that makes so much modern chamber-music simply absurd. And with regard to orchestration, the same holds good:[1] in perfect fitness and in subtly simple directness of effect he is certainly among the very greatest orchestral writers in the history of music. And though he lived before the days when

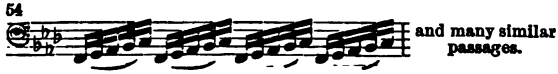
[1] The alterations which certain conductors have considered advisable will be discussed later.

any one imagined that mere colour was the chief ingredient in composition, nevertheless he knew perfectly well what it meant, as we can see (to name no other examples) in such movements as the Scherzo of the C minor Symphony, the *Adagio* of the E flat pianoforte concerto, or the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* of the Mass in D: and there are many touches to which we look forward in the concert-room with real expectation of the sheer physical pleasure resulting from beautiful and unusual sound. One of the most striking of these is the famously difficult horn entry—



in the *Adagio* of the fourth symphony, and indeed throughout his life Beethoven seems to have had a special partiality for the horn: he frequently, it must be confessed, wrote for it excessively awkwardly, in the sense that he quite disregarded the technical treacherousness of the instrument even in the hands of the finest players, but the parts are singularly beautiful and appropriate in conception, and the great solo in the slow movement of the Choral

Symphony is one of the most splendid opportunities a horn-player possesses. For the drums, again, he wrote as no one had done before: in the Scherzo of the Choral Symphony, in the opening pages of the violin concerto or the closing one of the Mass in D—to name no other instances—they speak with as full and striking an individuality as any instrument can possess. Indeed the only orchestral effects possible in his day which Beethoven seems to have rather overlooked are those arising from the lower registers of the flute and clarinet and from viola-tone in melodic passages—three colour-schemes that he hardly ever employs, though they are to be found in Gluck, Mozart, and Weber: in some ways, however, as in the purely "impressionistic" writing for the basses in the storm-movement in the Pastoral Symphony—



he anticipates what are usually considered to be exclusively modern effects. Trombones occur first in the score of the "Mount of Olives," but were never used at all habitu-

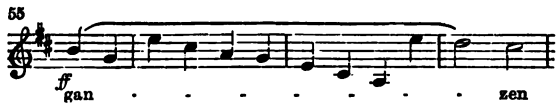
ally: for specially brilliant effects (as in the finale of the C minor symphony) Beethoven adds the piccolo and contrafagotto, and very occasionally (as in the finale of the Choral Symphony) the large drum, cymbals, and triangle. Harp and basset-horn make solitary appearances in the "Prometheus" ballet-music, but on the whole Beethoven seems to have had no desire to use unusual instruments: his orchestration is—

> "The touching of things common
> Till they rise to touch the spheres,"

not any recondite scheme of colour for its own sake.

Beethoven himself said that all his ideas invariably occurred to him in instrumental and not in vocal guise: and, speaking generally, we feel that throughout his life words seem to have been to him a hindrance rather than a help. In spite of the wonders of little things like the Op. 126 Bagatelles, his genius was certainly in essence epic and not lyric: as a rule, it required space for its full flights, and the few unimportant works of his that can justly be charged with structural diffuseness are almost all of small dimensions. And further, he seems to have had no special sympathy with

vocal expression as such, whether in small or large forms: in spite of all the splendid things of which full mention has been made in earlier chapters, we very rarely feel that words and music are indissoluble, and that the latter owes its existence to the impulse started by the former. No doubt we are somewhat inclined—in the frequent and most lamentable absence of any notion of advanced choral technique beyond the mere "drill-sergeant" ideal—to be unfair to the difficulty of the writing in works like the Choral Symphony and the Mass in D: except for the cruelly high range of the soprano part and a few other things like the arpeggio figures—



in the *Prestissimo* of the Choral Symphony, the music is, though very exacting, really entirely and suitably "singable." But still there is not the same inevitableness, not the same perfect adaptation of means to ends, that we find universally visible in the great instrumental works: and often we seem to feel that the voices are, so to speak,

necessary but not very welcome intruders, and that after all the composer's heart is really with his beloved orchestra.

But while we cannot avoid recognising that in certain features of his vocal writing Beethoven was simply careless, yet there is no doubt that he was in general far more anxious about the due rendering of all the expressive details of his works than any of his predecessors: his *nuances* are unusually numerous even in his earliest works, and his latest are crowded with them. Sometimes indeed—though, following the ordinary custom, he habitually used Italian indications except for a passing patriotic mood shown in the pianoforte sonatas, Op. 90 and Op. 101—he cannot find any but German words to convey the exact subtle shade of rhythm or of emotion, and so we have indications like the *mit Nachdruck* in the Rondo of the E flat pianoforte concerto or the *beklemmt* in the cavatina of the late B flat quartet: while in the C sharp minor pianoforte sonata and the early B flat and the E minor quartets we have examples of lengthy Italian subtleties designed to prevent any possible failure in expression. The particular *nuance* of *cresc. . . . p.*—the gradual rise in tone up to the sudden drop—is,

indeed, practically a mannerism with him: it is well-nigh unknown in any one else's music, but we find it up and down all Beethoven's works from the earliest to the latest, and always with some special object; and some words, such as *cantabile* and *appassionato*, are never used except with unusually insistent meaning.[1] Again, the original editions show that he made very clear distinctions between the staccato indicated by dots and that indicated by dashes: and it is the one unpardonable blot on Breitkopf and Härtel's great edition that this difference is abolished—many striking examples of the composer's care are, however, still easily to be seen in the article on the subject in the previously mentioned "Zweite Beethoveniana." Probably also, he was the first to use *ppp* and *fff* —the latter very rarely, the former more frequently, but never except in moments of unusual impressiveness: and he was no doubt the pioneer as regards pedal-indications, especially misty "Schumann-esque" effects, as in the *Prestissimo* of the "Waldstein" Sonata, the Bagatelle

[1] Perhaps the nearest parallel in subsequent music is the special use of *sostenuto* in the works of Brahms: here, indeed, the word is in this sense Brahms' own invention.

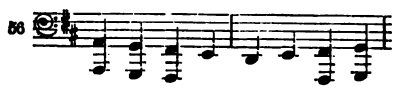
in A flat from Op. 33, and several other cases.

A kindred point of considerable interest is that of the "repeats" in binary-form movements: with earlier composers they are well-nigh *de rigueur*, as regards at any rate the exposition-section, and frequently as regards the subsequent portion as well. Of double repeats there are only a few examples in Beethoven, chiefly in the first-period works, but also in the E minor quartet, the D major trio, and the F major quartet, Op. 135—at the last of which there is an indication that the performers can repeat or not as they please.[1] This solitary permission perhaps looks, on the face of it, as if Beethoven insisted on all other repeats of all kinds being respected: but hardly any instrumentalists or conductors ever dream of playing repeats other than those of exposition-sections (and not always those) or of attending to indications like those demanding the triple performance of the bulk of the scherzo-movements of the E minor quartet and the B flat trio. And though indeed in some cases it is not diffi-

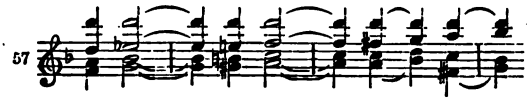
[1] The finale of the "Appassionata" Sonata is a unique example of a repeat of merely the latter portion of the movement.

cult to see special structural reasons for the presence or absence of repeat-marks, yet in many others it seems likely that the indications are, in the strict sense of the word, merely conventional, and therefore negligible at pleasure. The formal problem is worth consideration, and its solution is by no means simple: but anyhow there seems no middle ground between the discretionary use throughout all Beethoven's works of the permission tardily given in the last of them, and a rigid adherence to the letter of the text, "double repeats" and all.

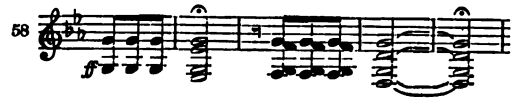
These considerations lead to the very interesting question as to the right of modern musicians to alter what they may think to be defects of a kind that would have been at once corrected by Beethoven were he living to-day: these fall into three divisions —results of the former limitations of particular instruments, possible results of the composer's deafness, and possible slips of the pen. With regard to the first of these, there are octave passages in the pianoforte works—



that no one but a mere pedant would think of playing in their original obviously truncated form on the modern enlarged keyboard: but on the other hand there are others where the limitations have produced "upper-pedal" effects—

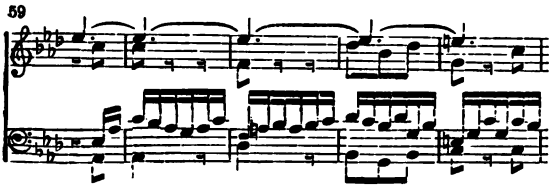


that add fresh beauty that should not be sacrificed for mere symmetry. Similarly, though the restrictions of Beethoven's old-fashioned trumpets sometimes result in rather awkward makeshifts, yet, had they been able to play more than the natural notes, we might never have had those colossally impressive bare thirds and fourths—

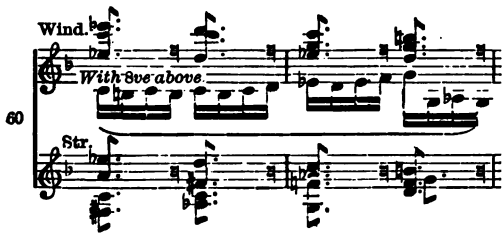


in the first movement of the C minor Symphony. As regards the second division of supposed "defects," it is of course obvious that the one point of technique

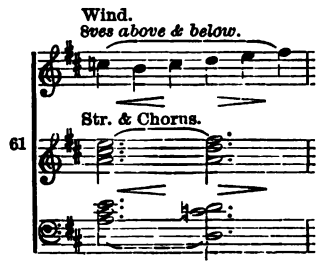
in which the composer's deafness might be felt is that of balance of tone; and certain passages, of which the most notable are those in the Scherzo of the Choral Symphony, are frequently re-scored accordingly. But it is nevertheless by no means certain that there is any real miscalculation of effect at all, and anyhow it is unquestionable that Wagner's well-known alterations produce a kind of undercurrent of thick brass tone which is totally alien to Beethoven's methods: the real solution is to preserve the original proportion by the employment of either reduced strings or doubled wind, without dragging unwarranted and wrong tone-colour into the music. It would really seem that, apart from the point of truncated pianoforte octaves (and, just conceivably, one or two trumpet notes) no sort of alteration is artistically justifiable at all: but the third division of "defects," the possible slips of the pen, stands on a different footing. No one now imagines that the extraordinary horn passage in the first movement of the "Eroica" Symphony (already quoted) or the "upper pedal" for the clarinet in the *Andante* of the C minor—



are mistakes at all: but there are a few cases which are undoubtedly unintentional, as they are merely cacophonous without a vestige of justification. One occurs in the *Vivace* of the A major Symphony, where, in a full *tutti*, strings and wind disagree entirely for half a bar: and there are two in the Choral Symphony (in the first movement, at the fifty-fourth bar after the return to the original key-signature—

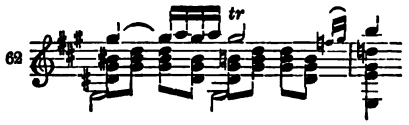


and again five bars before the end of the six-four chorus)—



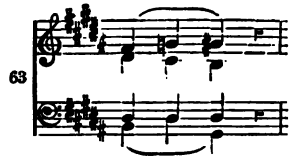
which are palpable confusions between two equally possible courses, and should be corrected one way or the other by all who do not believe that we honour Beethoven by performing nonsense.[1] Of course we must carefully distinguish from these passages those very numerous ones which the older critics gravely called "ungram-

[1] Perhaps the only sort of parallel in classical music to these curious slips is to be found in the *Adagio* of Brahms' pianoforte quartet in A, where, in all editions, an F natural occurs which can be corrected in two ways, but is absurd as it stands—



though one of the most famous living pianists has been heard to play it very expressively.

matical": no modern musician is impertinent enough to give Beethoven lessons in harmony, or to imagine that there are any such things as "rules of composition" apart from the practice of the great men of all times. The only things which are "ungrammatical" are some oddly careless slips of notation, of a kind palpable to any infantile student: the most curious is the recurrent G natural (in place of F double sharp) in the *Adagio* of the E flat pianoforte concerto—



which was all right in the first sketches.

We do not nowadays insult Beethoven's music by the application of childishly pedantic notions of "right" and "wrong": but, on the other hand, no composer has suffered so much at the hands of what may be called the interviewer type of critic, who simply will not at any price let the work of a great artist speak for itself. No doubt there are aspects of Beethoven's personal

character which give opportunities for flamboyant writing: but, while of course we must fully acknowledge that all art worth the name is an expression of the individuality of its creator, innumerable lessons scattered over the whole range of art and literature teach us to be exceedingly chary about inventing any close or definite connecting links between the creator's private life and the work that he gives to the world. It is idiotic, and worse, to attempt to measure the emotional content of great music by the penny foot-rule of the personal paragraphist: and we may leave the odd people who see in particular movements clear signs of Beethoven's relations with the Countess this and the Countess that in the outer darkness into which they have been plunged once for all by the fierce satire of Browning's "House":—

> "Outside should suffice for evidence:
> And whoso desires to penetrate
> Deeper, must dive by the spirit-sense—
> No optics like yours, at any rate!"

The broader but cognate problem of the general "meaning" of instrumental music unconnected with words or dramatic action is one of the burning questions of to-day,

and it is most interesting to observe Beethoven's attitude with regard to it: the primary and most important things to notice are that under no circumstances whatsoever did he allow his "titles" to influence his feeling of the paramount value of organic form, and that, with the possible exceptions of the birds and the storm in the Pastoral Symphony, the music would be in every way as intelligible and as beautiful if there were no titles at all. The many and elaborate sketches for the title-page of the Pastoral Symphony show how anxious he was to define his attitude: and the finally settled words "Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerei"—"more expression of feeling than painting"—have become proverbial. The only other authorised titles[1] are two pianoforte sonatas (the "Pathétique" and "Les adieux, l'absence, et le retour") the movement "La malinconia" in the early B flat quartet, the "Eroica"

[1] Excluding the "Rage over a lost penny" Rondo, the "Must it be? it must be!" of the finale of the Op. 135 quartet—apparently a reminiscence of a dialogue with his brother's cook—and the "Convalescent's Hymn to the Divinity" in the Op. 132 quartet: all these works were published posthumously, and there is little doubt that, at any rate, the first two names would (like the title of the *Adagio* of the Op. 59, No. 1 quartet) have disappeared in print.

Symphony, and the "Battle of Vittoria." This last is a purely negligible *pièce d'occasion*, and with all the others we see that the titles only express more or less vague moods without in the very faintest degree whatsoever fettering the natural development of the musical ideas. The slow movement of the first "Rasoumowsky" quartet is inscribed (but only in the manuscript) "a weeping willow or acacia tree over the grave of my brother:" and there are a good many anecdotes of what Beethoven said to friends. Thus, for example, the two Op. 14 sonatas were said to represent the "entreating and resisting principles" or dialogues between lovers: the so-called "Appassionata" Sonata was "elucidated" with the remark, "Read Shakespeare's 'Tempest,'" and the Op. 90 sonata in E minor was defined as a representation of the difficulties attending Count Moritz Lichnowsky's *liaison* with an actress whom he subsequently married. But we must never forget that all through his life Beethoven was a practical joker of the most incorrigible type, and few things seem to have given him more pleasure than to mystify and mislead his friends: his solemn hoaxing of the faithful Schindler over a totally

impossible and imaginary yellow-hammer in the Pastoral Symphony is well known, and it is highly probable that all the unpublished descriptions mentioned above are mere jokes. It seems very likely that the inscription on the noble *Adagio* of the first "Rasoumowsky" quartet refers (in the absence of any brother's death) to the signing of the marriage-contract of Carl Beethoven—to which Ludwig was much opposed—a day or two before the movement was begun; the remark about the Op. 14 sonatas is well-nigh meaningless, and that about the so-called "Appassionata" seems to show (if serious) that Beethoven knew nothing of "The Tempest" except its name; while the title of the Op. 90 sonata is obviously a mere passing joke that the composer has entirely forgotten when he writes the dedicatory letter to his "liebster Graf, liebstes Schaf." Indeed, apart from the vulgar realism of the "Battle of Vittoria," and the after all comparatively unimportant Pastoral Symphony (where we see the conflict between reminiscences of the methods of the similar work of Knecht, which no doubt suggested it, and the more strictly artistic canons of Beethoven's own) his "programme-titles" divide themselves into

those authorised by print—all of which are serious, but are mere vague and "non-committal" hints of general mood—and those in manuscript or conversation—all of which (except the "Convalescent's Hymn to the Divinity" in the A minor quartet and "Les derniers soupirs"—of Romeo and Juliet, it appears—in the sketches for the *Adagio* of the early F major quartet)—seem to be mere jokes. It is true that Beethoven said in 1815 to Neate, an Englishman who saw a good deal of him at that time, that he "never worked without a picture in his mind:" but it is very difficult to know what, supposing he was speaking seriously, he meant by this cryptic remark. Perhaps Beethoven liked to amuse himself (as Schumann certainly did) with weaving, for purely private consumption, fanciful notions about his instrumental music: but his furious rage over the "La chasse" title to the undesignated overture, Op. 115, seems to show that he strongly objected to any one else doing so. Music may reinforce the appeal of words or dramatic action, but it is not self-articulate: and, indeed, there are few less profitable pastimes for the music-lover than to cudgel his brains to entirely unnecessary fits of inventiveness

over what is in every possible respect entirely independent of verbal "meanings" of any shape or kind. Let us then, in simple and reverential honesty, accept the great music as we find it, and decline to listen to those strange latter-day prophets who (in flat disregard of everything that their supposed leader, Wagner, said on the subject) would degrade instrumental music from her ancient proudly independent sovereignty to the position of an importunate beggar-woman at the doors of the painter and the novelist.

It is curious, indeed, that the jesting aspect of Beethoven's attitude towards instrumental "meanings" should so often have been overlooked: for humour is one of the most striking characteristics of much of his music. It shows itself in all sorts of shapes—now joyously youthful and, so to speak, bubbling, now smilingly and placidly good-natured, now freakish and wildly perverse, now rough and boisterous, now fierce and sardonic: and it is perhaps, almost beyond everything else, the most peculiar and unique element in his music. Not indeed that it is ever to be regarded as something (as the word humour is too often degraded to mean) that we, at any rate,

are not bound to take distinctly seriously: even when—to use his own expression—in his most "unbuttoned" mood, Beethoven is never anything remotely like the "idle singer of an empty day." There is indeed in the whole range of music practically no parallel to Beethoven's kind of "world-humour": and hardly anywhere indeed even outside music, except Carlyle.

No doubt the many thick volumes of Beethoven's complete works contain a considerable mass of material which the music-lover can well afford to disregard: indeed, compared with many of the great composers, and especially with Bach and Brahms, the other two chief landmarks in the music of the last two centuries, his output is distinctly unequal. There are a good many things of various shapes and sizes—all quite unknown to the concert-goer of to-day—which he seems to have turned out unconcernedly in odd moments without any sort of really artistic impulse: in a sense indeed, enormously self-critical as he usually was (the sketch-books are an inexhaustible study in this respect), his self-criticism took occasional holidays. No musician who ever lived had a more supreme feeling for organic structure, yet he could pen, and publish

separately, for his own concertos, cadenzas which are mere incoherent meanderings, that no modern pianist with a real reverence for the rest of the works would venture to perform. But, after all, this comes to very little: no one thinks, let us say, Milton superior to Shakespeare merely because the latter left a larger refuse-heap behind him. It is the business of the historical critic to set down everything without favour: but a great man must be judged by his greatness.

And before the greatness of the great works of Beethoven criticism is dumb. Like all products of supreme genius in every age and style, they are independent of historical limitations: other things change and grow old, but they endure. All kinds of performers, from the rigid dullard to the incoherent sentimentalist, can do their worst on them: but they remain with all their strength and beauty undiminished and inexhaustible, and the man who has been probably the noblest personal influence ever known among executants can modestly say, in his seventieth year, that he thinks he is just beginning to understand them. And the more we study the great music of Beethoven or any one else, the more do we recognise the impossibility of "de-

scribing" anything but the mere shell. It has no "meaning," it is simply itself: and great art is something in connection with which language, which after all is only one of the media for the expression of thought, is both inadequate and irrelevant. We may throw out vague adjectives: but the essence is far too deep and subtle to fix in this clumsy way. Still, beyond our attempts at analysis of externals, it is all we can do: but the last word of any lover of Beethoven who has ventured to write a book about him that touches merely the fringes of the theme must be to send readers to the music itself. To talk about what we do not know is a singularly futile proceeding: our business, if we wish to try to go ever so little on the way to understand Beethoven, is to read or perform or hear his works, remembering always that, for every one who claims to be a musician, to reverence the great composers and to keep oneself artistically alive are the first and last commandments.

COMPLETE LIST OF BEETHOVEN'S WORKS

A. Works with Opus Number

The order is that of publication: it only very vaguely, and with some notable anachronisms, represents that of composition).

Op. 1. Three Trios for Pianoforte and Strings (E flat, G, C minor).
2. Three Sonatas for Pianoforte (F minor, A, C).
3. Trio for Strings (E flat).
4. Quintet for Strings (E flat). An arrangement of the earlier Op. 103.
5. Two Sonatas for Pianoforte and Violoncello (F, G minor).
6. Sonata for Pianoforte Duet (D).
7. Sonata for Pianoforte (E flat).
8. Serenade for String-Trio (D). See Op. 42.
9. Three Trios for Strings (G, D, C minor).
10. Three Sonatas for Pianoforte (C minor, F, D).
11. Trio for Pianoforte, Clarinet (or Violin) and Violoncello (B flat).

Op. 12. Three Sonatas for Pianoforte and Violin (D, A, E flat).

13. Sonata for Pianoforte (C minor)—"Pathétique."

14. Two Sonatas for Pianoforte (E, G).

15. Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra No. 1 (C).

16. Quintet for Pianoforte, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon (E flat): arranged by the composer as a Quartet for Pianoforte and Strings, and also as a String Quartet (see Op. 75).

17. Sonata for Pianoforte and Horn (or Violoncello) (F).

18. Six Quartets for Strings (F, G, D, C minor, A, B flat).

19. Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra, No. 2 (B flat).

20. Septet for Strings and Wind (E flat).

21. Symphony No. 1 (C).

22. Sonata for Pianoforte (B flat).

23. Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin (A minor).

24. Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin (F).

25. Serenade for Flute, Violin, and Viola (D).

26. Sonata for Pianoforte (A flat).

27. Two Sonatas for Pianoforte (E flat, C sharp minor).

28. Sonata for Pianoforte (D).

29. Quintet for Strings (C).

30. Three Sonatas for Pianoforte and Violin (A, C minor, G).

Op. 31. Three Sonatas for Pianoforte (G, D minor, E flat).
32. Song "An die Hoffnung."
33. Seven Bagatelles for Pianoforte.
34. Variations, on an original theme, for Pianoforte (F).
35. Variations and Fugue, on a theme from the "Prometheus" Ballet, for Pianoforte (E flat).
36. Symphony No. 2 (D).
37. Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra No. 3 (C minor).
38. Trio for Pianoforte, Clarinet (or Violin), and Violoncello (E flat). An arrangement of Op. 20.
39. Two Preludes for Pianoforte or Organ.
40. Romance for Violin and Orchestra (G).
41. Serenade for Pianoforte and Flute (or Violin) (D). An arrangement of Op. 25.
42. Notturno for Pianoforte and Viola (D). Arranged from Op. 8.
43. Ballet, "Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus," for Orchestra.
44. Variations for Pianoforte, Violin, and Violoncello (E flat).
45. Three Marches for Pianoforte Duet.
46. Song, "Adelaide."
47. Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin (A).
48. Six Songs.
49. Two Sonatas for Pianoforte (G minor, G).

Op. 50. Romance for Violin and Orchestra (F).
51. Two Rondos for Pianoforte (C, G).
52. Eight Songs.
53. Sonata for Pianoforte (C).
54. Sonata for Pianoforte (F).
55. Symphony No. 3 (E flat)—"Eroica."
56. Concerto for Pianoforte, Violin, Violoncello, and Orchestra (C).
57 Sonata for Pianoforte (F minor).
58. Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra No. 4 (G).
59. Three Quartets for Strings (F, E minor, C).
60. Symphony No. 4 (B flat).
61. Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (D). Also arranged as a Pianoforte Concerto.
62. Overture "Coriolan."
63. Trio for Pianoforte and Strings. An arrangement of Op. 4.
64. Sonata for Pianoforte and Violoncello. An arrangement of Op. 3.
65. Scena, "Ah, perfido!" for Soprano and Orchestra.
66. Variations on Mozart's "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen," for Pianoforte and Violoncello.
67. Symphony No. 5 (C minor).
68. Symphony No. 6 (F)—"Pastoral."
69. Sonata for Pianoforte and Violoncello (A).
70. Two Trios for Pianoforte and Strings (D, E flat).

Op. 71. Sextet for Clarinets, Horns, and Bassoons (E flat).
72. Opera, "Fidelio."
73. Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra, No. 5 (E flat).
74. Quartet for Strings (E flat).
75. Six Songs: and also an arrangement for String Quartet of Op. 16.
76. Variations for Pianoforte (D). See Op. 113.
77. Fantasia for Pianoforte (G minor).
78. Sonata for Pianoforte (F sharp).
79. Sonata for Pianoforte (G).
80. Fantasia for Pianoforte, Chorus, and Orchestra (C).
81A. Sonata for Pianoforte (E flat)—"Les adieux, l'absence, et le retour."
81B. Sextet for Strings and Horns (E flat).
82. Four Songs and a Duet.
83. Three Songs.
84. Music to "Egmont."
85. Oratorio, "Christus am Oelberge."
86. Mass No. 1 (C).
87. Trio for two Violins and Viola (C). A sanctioned arrangement of a Trio for two Oboes and English Horn.
88. Song, "Das Glück der Freundschaft."
89. Polonaise for Pianoforte (C).
90. Sonata for Pianoforte (E minor).
91. "Wellington's Victory, or the Battle of Vittoria," for Orchestra.

Op. 92. Symphony No. 7 (A).
93. Symphony No. 8 (F).
94. Song, "An die Hoffnung."
95. Quartet for Strings (F minor).
96. Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin (G).
97. Trio for Pianoforte and Strings (B flat).
98. Song-cycle, "An die ferne Geliebte."
99. Song, "Der Mann von Wort."
100. Duet, "Merkenstein."
101. Sonata for Pianoforte (A).
102. Two Sonatas for Pianoforte and Violoncello (C, D).
103. Octet for Oboes, Clarinets, Horns, and Bassoons (E flat). See Op. 4.
104. Quintet for Strings (C minor). An arrangement of Op. 1, No. 3.
105. Variations for Pianoforte and Flute (or Violin).
106. Sonata for Pianoforte (B flat).
107. Ten National Themes with variations for Pianoforte and Flute (or Violin).
108. Twenty-five Scotch Songs, for one or more voices, with Pianoforte, Violin, and Violoncello.
109. Sonata for Pianoforte (E).
110. Sonata for Pianoforte (A flat).
111. Sonata for Pianoforte (C minor).
112. "Meerestille und Glückliche Fahrt," for Chorus and Orchestra.
113. Music to "Die Ruinen von Athen." No. 4 is the theme of Op. 76.

Op. 114. March and Chorus from Op. 113.
115. Overture (C).
116. Terzetto, "Tremate."
117. Music to "König Stephen."
118. Elegiac Song for four Voices and Strings.
119. Eleven Bagatelles for Pianoforte.
120. Variations for Pianoforte on a Theme by Diabelli (C).
121A. Adagio, Variations, and Rondo for Pianoforte, Violin, and Violoncello.
121B. "Opferlied" for Soprano, Chorus, and Orchestra.
122. "Bundeslied" for Chorus and Wind.
123. Mass No. 2 (D). "Missa Solennis."
124. Overture, "Die Weihe des Hauses."
125. Symphony No. 9 (D minor). "Choral."
126. Six Bagatelles for Pianoforte.
127. Quartet for Strings (E flat).
128. Song "Der Kuss."
129. Rondo and Capriccio for Pianoforte (G).
130. Quartet for Strings (B flat).
131. Quartet for Strings (C sharp minor).
132. Quartet for Strings (A minor).
133. Fugue for String Quartet (B flat).
134. Fugue for Pianoforte Duet. An arrangement of Op. 133.
135. Quartet for Strings (F).
136. Cantata, "Der glorreiche Augenblick."
137. Fugue for String Quartet (D).
138. Overture "Leonora No. 1" (C).

B. Works without Opus-Number

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